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THE  
CONVIVIO OF  
DANTE ALIGHIERI

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*The Seven liberal Arts, with their representative exponents, from the prescoe in the Spanish Chapel of the Church of Santa Maria Novella in Florence.*



THE



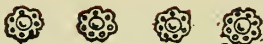
CONVIVIO



OF



DANTE



ALIGHIERI



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# THE CONVIVIO

## THE FIRST TREATISE

### CHAPTER I

[Man naturally desires knowledge, but because of inward and outward impediments may seldom attain to it. The privileged few who so attain, urged by natural benevolence, desire to give of their precious possession to others ; and so likewise the author who, sitting at their feet, has gathered some fragments of wisdom, has in charity imparted thereof to others, in his odes ; and now perceiving that those odes (and parts of the *Vita Nuova*) are scarce intelligible without a literal and allegorical commentary, he invites those who are too busy or too slothful to study for themselves (but not those who are too vicious or too incompetent) to come and share of his intellectual feast.]

As saith the Philosopher in the beginning of the First Philosophy, ‘ All men by nature desire to know ’ ; the reason whereof may be, that each thing, impelled by its own natural foresight, inclines to its own perfection ; wherefore, inasmuch as knowledge is the distinguishing perfection of our soul, wherein consists our distinguishing [10] blessedness, all of us are naturally subject to the longing for it. Yet of this most noble perfection many are bereft, for divers causes ; which, inside of the man and

The natural love of knowledge

How outside of him, keep him from acquiring the  
baffled habit of knowledge.

Inside of the man there may be two defects and impediments; the one from the side of the body, the other from the side of the soul. From the side of the body is it, when the parts [20] are unduly disposed, so that it can receive nought; as with the deaf and the dumb, and their likes. From the side of the soul is it when vice hath such supremacy in her that she giveth herself to pursuing vicious delights, wherein she is deluded to such a point that for their sake she holds all things cheap.

Outside of the man, likewise, two causes may be detected, one of which brings about compulsion, [30] the other indolence. The former is that family and civic care which rightly engages to itself the greater number of men, so that they may not abide in leisure of speculation. The latter is the defect of the place where the person is born and nurtured, which may chance to be not only void of all provision for study, but remote from studious folk.

The two first of these causes, to wit the [40] first from the inner side and the first from the outer side, are not to be blamed, but to be excused, and deserve to be pardoned. The two others (though one of them more than the other) deserve to be blamed and abominated. Manifestly then may he perceive who rightly considers, that few be left who may reach to that habit which is desired by all; and well-nigh beyond number are they which be hindered and which [50] live all their lives famished for this universal food. Oh blessed those few who

sit at the table where the bread of angels is consumed, and wretched they who share the food of sheep! But inasmuch as every man is naturally friendly to every man, and every friend is grieved by the defect of his friend, they who are fed at so lofty a table are not without compassion towards [60] those whom they see browsing round on grass and acorns in the pasture of brutes; and inasmuch as compassion is the mother of benefaction, they who know ever proffer freely of their good wealth to those poor indeed, and are as a living spring at whose waters the natural thirst above spoken of is refreshed. And I, therefore, who sit not at the blessed table, but, having fled the pasture of the common herd, gather, at the feet [70] of them who sit at meat, of that which falls from them; and who, by reason of the sweetness which I experience in that which little by little I gather, recognise the wretched life of those whom I have left behind me; moved to compassion, though not forgetting myself, have reserved somewhat for the wretched; which somewhat, already some time ago, I have displayed to their eyes, and thereby have made them the more eager. Wherefore, desiring now to make provision for them, [80] I purpose to make a general banquet of that which I have already displayed to them and of the bread which is needful for suchlike viand, without which they might not eat it at this banquet; such bread, to wit, as is worthy of the viand which I well understand to have been offered them in vain.

And therefore I would not have any take his seat who is ill-disposed as to his organs, inas-

The  
bread of  
angels

The much as he has neither tooth nor tongue nor  
 invitation [90] palate; nor any addicted to vice, inasmuch  
 as his stomach is full of poisonous and contrary  
 humours, so that it would not retain my viands.  
 But let come whosoever, because of family and  
 civil care, hath been kept in human hunger, and  
 let him seat himself at the same table with others  
 impeded in like manner. And at their feet let all  
 those place themselves who have been excluded  
 by their sloth, for they are not worthy to sit  
 more high. And let these and those [100]  
 take my viand, together with the bread which  
 will enable them both to taste and to digest it.

The viands of this banquet will be served in  
 fourteen fashions, that is to say fourteen odes,  
 treating as well of love as of virtue, which  
 without the present bread had the shadow of  
 a certain obscurity, so that to many their beauty  
 was more in favour than their excellence. But  
 this bread, to wit the present exposition, will be  
 the light which [110] shall make apparent every  
 hue of their significance. And if in the present  
 work (which is entitled, and which I wish to  
 be, the *Banquet*) the handling be more virile  
 than in the *New Life*, I do not intend thereby  
 to throw a slight in any respect upon the  
 latter, but rather to strengthen that by this;  
 seeing that it conforms to reason that that  
 should be fervid and impassioned, this temperate  
 and virile. For a different thing is comely to  
 say and to do at [120] one age than at another;  
 wherefore certain ways are suitable and laudable  
 at one age which are foul and blameworthy at  
 another, as will be shown on its own account  
 further on, in the fourth treatise of this book.

And in that I spoke before entrance on the prime of manhood, and in this when I had already passed the same. And inasmuch as my true purport was other than the aforesaid odes outwardly [130] display, I intend to set them forth by allegorical exposition after having discussed the literal story. So that the one account and the other will supply a relish to those who are invited to this feast; whom I pray, one and all, that if the banquet be not so magnificent as consorts with the proclamation thereof, they shall impute every defect not to my will but to my power; because what my will herein aims at is a full and [140] hearty liberality.

Convivio  
and Vita  
Nuova

Prefixed to each chapter is a summary of its contents, the object of which is partly to serve as an index in helping the reader to find any passages he may want, partly to set the details of the work in their true proportion and perspective, and partly to indicate the actual meaning that underlies the sometimes fantastic imagery of the author. These requirements, one and all, vary so greatly in different portions of the *Convivio* that it would be unwise to adopt any rigid system in these summaries, and the reader must therefore look for no formal consistency in them.

A system of marginal notes has been adopted which it is hoped will give the student material help in grasping the articulation of the work as he reads it, and in finding passages he may wish to recover subsequently. See the 'Analytical Note' on pp. 383 ff.

The notes appended to each chapter will for the most part have no other object than (within the narrow limits natural in a popular edition) to make the text intelligible by explaining what Dante is talking about and what he says. The many fascinating questions as to his methods of work and sources of information which the study of the *Convivio* raises will seldom be touched upon for their own sake. And in like manner, references to the *Comedy*, or to Dante's other works, are only given when a comparison

of two or more passages is likely to throw essential light upon one or other of them, and even in such cases the student will often be left to his own resources. The mere occurrence of the same name or the same idea in some other work of Dante's will not as a rule be noticed.

\* \* \* *The numbers inserted in the text in square brackets, used for reference in the notes and elsewhere, are those of the lines in Dr. Moore's Oxford Dante.*

*The Title.* The proper title of this work is *Il Convivio* (Latin, *convivium*), and so it was called in the four earliest editions. But in 1826 it was edited by Trivulzio under the title of *Il Convito* (Latin, *convictus*), which it has retained ever since. Dr. Witte (*Essays on Dante*,<sup>1</sup> pp. 368-373) has shown that the manuscript authority is overwhelmingly in favour of *Convivio*, and perhaps an attempt should be made to restore it, though it may be doubted whether the erroneous form is not now too familiarly established to be dislodged.

1. *The Philosopher* = Aristotle.

2. *The First Philosophy* = The *Metaphysics*.

4-11. For the reason Dante assigns for our love of knowledge compare *Paradiso*, I. 103 ff., together with the *arguments* and *notes* in the 'Temple Classics' *Dante. Distinguishing perfection*, in the original, *ultima perfezione*. For this use of *ultimo*, compare *De Monarchia*, I. 3: 30-65. If, for example, we divide beings into corporeal and incorporeal, corporeal beings into animate and inanimate, animate corporeal beings into those that can feel and those that cannot, sensitive animals into rational and irrational, then the qualification 'rational' is the 'ultimate' or 'last' distinction. The *differentia* of man, therefore, being the exercise of reason, is the 'conclusive,' 'differentiating,' 'specific' or 'distinguishing' excellence or perfection of man.

11. *Subject*. Compare *Purgatorio*, XVI. 79-81, and *note*.

15. *Habit*. This is a technical word, with the full significance of which the reader will become gradually familiar. It means the *possession* of an acquired capacity, as distinct from the *exercise* of it. A man who can

<sup>1</sup> Translated by Lawrence and Wicksteed. Duckworth & Co., 1898.

read Latin has the 'habit' of Latin, a man who can write has the 'habit' of writing. The acquisition of this capacity is itself the actualisation of a potentiality which was dormant until trained, but it is itself only a potentiality with reference to the act of writing. The acquired 'habit' or power is therefore sometimes called the 'first actualising' of the potentiality, the exercise of that acquired capacity being the second or complete actualising thereof. Compare II. 14 : 26, *note* (p. 121).

27-39. The claims of family and civic life are recognised as laying a man under the *necessity* of giving the greater part of his available energy to his practical business. Compare *Ecclesiasticus*, xxxvii. 24-34, and also *Convivio*, I. 11 : 40-46. Whereas the absence of help and companionship in study only furnishes an *excuse* to the mental indolence it begets. *Provision for study*. The Italian is *studio*, the regular word for a university or organised institution for the higher education.

55, 56. Dante regards love of self, love of others and love of God as natural to man. Compare the notes on the classification of sins at the end of the *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* volumes of the 'Temple Classics.' *Convivio*, III. 1 : 34-36 ; IV. 4 : 1-44. *Purgatorio*, XVII. 106-111. *Paradiso*, XXVI. 16-36, and many other passages.

74, 75. 'Not forgetting myself,' compare I. 13 : 84.

76. *Which somewhat*. This is an obvious reference to the odes, and we may perhaps infer that the 14 odes on which the *Convivio* was to comment already formed a recognised collection. There can be little doubt as to the order in which they were to stand. After the three odes actually dealt with by Dante in this work, the other eleven followed in the order in which they are given on pp. 388-416 of this volume. The 15th ode '*Amor, dacchè convien pur ch'io mi doglia*' (XI. in Moore's edition), was probably written subsequently and was not included in the scheme of the *Convivio*. What has become of the ode referred to in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, II. 11 : 22, beginning '*Traggemi della mente amor la stiva*,' remains a mystery.

Mr Edmund Gardner supplies me with the following note on the order of Dante's Canzoni or Odes :—

'The majority of the existing MSS. of Dante's Canzoni



give these 15 odes as a single and complete work, in a definite and constant order, frequently with a rubric prefixed to each, giving the number and subject of each poem. The order is the same as that adopted here, but with one notable difference—the canzone of the “*aspro parlare*” (*così nel mio parlar voglio esser aspro*) stands not 6th, but 1st. The earliest known MS. of this type belongs to quite the latter part of the 14th century. The few MSS. of the canzoni that can with certainty be assigned to an earlier date than this are seldom complete, do not present these poems as a whole or collection, and each MS. has a different order. But in one of the earliest and most authoritative of them there is evidence of an original arrangement of the canzoni in which this canzone of the *aspro parlare* stood 6th, immediately after the five poems of philosophic love. If we take the arrangement given us by the MSS. just mentioned, but transfer this canzone to this 6th place, the whole collection falls at once into an order which is precisely that required by the indications given in the *Convivio* itself as to the subjects to be treated in three of the unwritten books.’

Treatise VII. (*Ode VI.*) is referred to in IV. 26 : 66 f., and probably in III. 10 : 41 ; treatise XIV. (*Ode XIII.*) in I. 12 : 87 f., II. 1 : 35 f., IV. 27 : 100 ff. ; treatise XV. (*Ode XIV.*) in I. 8 : 128-132, III. 15 : 140-145.

86, 87. *I well understand*, etc. See note on I. 2 : 111-130.

126. *Prime of manhood*. In Italian, *gioventute*. Dante defines it in IV. 24 : 22-29 as extending from the twenty-fifth to the forty-fifth year. The bearing of this passage on the dates of the *Vita Nuova* and the *Convivio* is discussed in the Appendix, p. 420.

123, 124. See chapters 23-28 of the fourth treatise.

105, 106. That their beauty should be felt without their meaning was bad ; but perhaps not so bad as that their sense should be understood without their beauty. Compare I. 7 : 88-91 ; also the ode of the second treatise, line 31, and the commentary in II. 12 : 21-27, 52-67.

127-132. Compare I. 2 : 120-123, and note.



## CHAPTER II

[(I.) The author must apologise (*a*) for speaking of himself, and (*b*) for speaking darkly. (*a*) How, in speaking of any man, we either praise or blame him, and why a man's friends (of whom he himself is closest) should not be rebuked nor praised in public save for good cause. But as there are occasions when we may rebuke or laud others to their face, so there are occasions on which we may speak of ourselves, and amongst them are (*a*) self-defence from infamous charges, and (*b*) the opportunity of doing great service to others, both of which apply to the author's case; for his explanations will clear him of the charge of unrestrained passion suggested by the odes, and will enable him to explain the principles of allegorical poetry.]

At the beginning of every well-ordered banquet the servants are wont to take the bread that is set out and cleanse it from every blemish. Wherefore I, who in this present writing am taking their place, purpose at the outset to cleanse this exposition, which counts for the bread in my repast, from two blemishes. The one is, that for anyone to speak of himself seems [10] unjustifiable, and the other, that for an expounder himself to discourse too profoundly seems unreasonable; and this appearance of what is unjustifiable and unreasonable the knife of my judgment cleanses away in the fashion that follows.

Rhetoricians forbid a man to speak of *a*. himself, except on needful occasion. And from this a man is prohibited, because it is impossible to speak of any without the speaker

On self-praise and blame either praising or blaming him [20] of whom he speaks. And there is a want of urbanity in either of these kinds of discourse finding a place on a man's own proper lips. And to solve a doubt which rises here, I say that it is worse to blame than to praise, though neither the one nor the other should be done. The reason is, that what is directly blameworthy is fouler than what is incidentally so.

To dispraise one's self is directly blameworthy, because a man should tell his friend of [30] a fault in secret, and there is no closer friend to a man than himself; wherefore it is in the chamber of his own thoughts that he should take himself to task and bewail his faults, not openly. Again, for lacking the power or the knowledge to conduct himself rightly a man for the most part is not blamed; but for lacking the will he always is, for it is by willing and not willing that our badness and goodness is judged. And so he who blames [40] himself, by showing that he knows his fault, exposes his lack of goodness. And, therefore, a man must refrain, on its own account, from speaking in blame of himself.

Self-praise is to be avoided as evil by implication, inasmuch as such praise cannot be given without its turning to yet greater blame. It is praise on the surface of the words, it is blame if we search into their entrails; for words are produced to demonstrate what [50] is not known. Wherefore, whosoever praises himself shows that he does not believe himself to be well thought of, which will not happen unless he has an evil conscience, which in his self-praise is revealed, and when revealed is blamed.

And further, self-praise and self-blame are to be shunned for one common reason, as the bearing of false witness ; for there is no man who is a true and just measurer of himself, so does our kindness [60] to ourselves deceive us. Whence it happens that every one hath in his judgment the measures of the unjust trader who sells with one and buys with another ; and each one takes stock of his evil-doing with a large measure and takes stock of his good with a little one, so that the number and quantity and weight of the good seems to him greater than if it were assayed with a just measure, and that of the evil less. Wherefore, when speaking of himself in praise or the contrary, either he speaks [70] falsely with respect to the thing of which he speaks, or he speaks falsely with respect to his own belief ; and the one and the other is falsity. And this is why (inasmuch as assenting to an opinion is a way of professing it) he is guilty of discourtesy who praises or blames another to his face ; because he who is thus estimated can neither assent nor protest without falling into the error of praising or blaming himself. Save, be it understood, in the way of due rebuke, which cannot be without [80] blame of the fault which is to be corrected ; and save in the way of due honouring and magnifying, which cannot come about without mention made of the virtuous deeds or of the dignities virtuously acquired.

On the  
illusion  
of self-  
love

But, returning to the main purport, I say, as indicated above, that speaking of himself is permitted on needful occasions ; and amongst other needful [90] occasions two are most manifest.

On what occasion a man may speak of himself

The one is when it is impossible without speaking of himself to quash great infamy and peril; and then it is allowed by reason that taking the least evil path of two is in a way taking a good one. And this necessity moved Boethius to speak of himself, so that under cover of consolation he might ward off the perpetual infamy of his exile, showing that it [100] was unjust; since no other arose to ward it off. The other

a, β. is when by a man discoursing of himself the highest advantage, in the way of instruction, follows therefrom to others; and this reason moved Augustine, in the *Confessions*, to speak of himself; for by the progress of his life, which was from bad to good, and from good to better, and from better to best, he gave example and instruction which could not have been received otherwise on such [110] sure testimony.

Wherefore, if the one and the other of these occasions excuses me, the bread of my leavening is purged from its first blemishes. I am moved by the fear of infamy, and I am moved by the desire to give instruction which in very truth no other can give. I fear the infamy of having pursued so great a passion as he who reads the above-named odes conceives to have had [120] dominion over me. Which infamy is entirely quenched by this present discourse concerning myself, which shows that not passion but virtue was the moving cause. I purpose also to reveal the true meaning of the said odes, which none may perceive unless I relate it, because it is hidden under figure of allegory. And this will not only give fair delight to hear, but subtle instruction, both in discoursing after this fashion

and in [130] understanding after this fashion the writings of others.

The  
meaning  
of the  
Odes

16. *Necessaria cagione.* Compare *Purgatorio*, XXX. 55, 62, 63.

96. *Boethius* (c. 475-525 A.D.) a scholar and statesman under Theodoric. His studies were principally philosophical and scientific, and he translated many of Aristotle's logical works. See *note* on II. 14: 105. He was associated with the most eminent Christian scholars of the day, professed Christianity, and wrote two theological tracts, one on the doctrine of the Trinity and the other on the two natures and one person of Christ. His interest in these questions was philosophical rather than religious, and he shows small knowledge either of the Scriptures or of other Christian writings. When condemned to death by Theodoric, on the charge of treasonable practices, he wrote his celebrated *Consolation of Philosophy*, which is in effect a book of lofty Pagan religion and philosophy, from which it is evident that the author's spiritual life had been fed from Pagan and not Christian sources. The work, however, became a great favourite in Christian circles, and was one of the most popular books in the Middle Ages, Christian readers probably finding unconscious support in the fact that it supplemented the specifically Christian writings on their weak side, by attempting to show that, apart from any consideration of future rewards and punishments, and apart from any guidance furnished by revealed truth, the good man, judged merely by the results in this life and by the canons of reason, had made a better and happier choice than the wicked man. It is probable, however, that other readers besides Dante (compare *Paradiso*, X. 124-126) read into the text of Boethius a touch of 'other worldliness' that is not really there. One early commentator, however, noted that it contained 'certain things contrary to the Catholic faith.' *N.B.*—The note in the 'Temple Classics' *Paradiso* on Canto X. 124-129 (up to and including the 4th ed.) must be corrected by this note.

104. *Augustine* (354-430 A.D.). Augustine more than any one theologian, perhaps more than all of them to-

gether, must be regarded as the fountain head of the theology of the Western Church. His *Confessions* carry the story of his life up to his conversion and baptism in his thirty-third year. In Book X. 3, 4 he explains how he hopes that his self-revelation may be justified by its effect upon others.

111-130. It is impossible to think that Dante really believed that any conceivable interpretation or misinterpretation of the ode that stands at the head of the second treatise could have brought 'infamy' upon him. But if we look at *Ode VI.* (that would have stood at the head of the seventh treatise) we shall very well understand the grounds of Dante's uneasiness, and why he wished to dissociate himself from the moral implications of his poetic record. See Appendix, p. 430 ff.

127-130. Compare II. 1 : 34-36.

### CHAPTER III

- [(b) A commentary so dark as itself to need a commentary seems futile; but the difficulty of the present work has a deliberate purpose, for which the author would to God there had been no cause; for it is founded on his wanderings as an exile, and the contempt which his forlorn appearance has everywhere brought upon him; inasmuch as (a) fame magnifies but (β) familiar presence depreciates a man's qualities. (α) Men magnify report, good or evil, partly from emotional sympathy with the subject (which is innocent), and partly from self-importance (which is culpable).]

On WORTHY of much blame is the thing which, being appointed to remove some special defect, itself induces that same; as if one should be appointed to part a strife, and before he had

obscure  
commentaries

b.

parted it had set another on foot. And now that my bread has been purged on one side, it behoves me to purge it on the other, that I may escape this latter blame; for my present writing, which may be called a kind of [10] commentary, while commissioned to remove the defect of the aforesaid odes, may perhaps in certain places be a little difficult itself. Which difficulty is here designed to avoid a greater defect, and not in ignorance. Oh that it had pleased the disposer of the universe that the occasion of my excuse had never been! For then neither would others have sinned against me, nor should I have unjustly suffered penalty, the penalty [20] I mean of exile and of poverty. Since it was the pleasure of the citizens of the most beautiful and the most famous daughter of Rome, Florence, to cast me forth from her most sweet bosom (wherein I was born, and nurtured until the culmination of my life, wherein with their good leave I long with all my heart to repose my wearied mind and end the time which is granted me), through well-nigh all the regions whereto this tongue extends [30], a wanderer, almost a beggar, have I paced, revealing, against my will, the wound of fortune, which is often wont to be unjustly imputed to him who is wounded. Verily have I been a ship without sail and without helm, drifted upon divers ports and straits and shores by the dry wind that grievous poverty exhales. And I have seemed cheap in the eyes of many who perchance had conceived of me in other guise by some certain fame; [40] in the sight of whom not only has my person been cheapened, but every work of mine, already

The  
author's  
unjust  
banish-  
ment



On the  
dilation  
of fame accomplished or yet to do, has become of lower price.

*a, β.* The reason why this comes to pass (not only in me but in all) it is my pleasure here briefly to touch upon; and first, why a man's reputation dilates things more than truth demands; and then, why, more than truth demands, his presence makes them shrink. Good report, begotten at the beginning [50] in the mind of a friend by a good action, is first brought to birth by this mind; for the mind of an enemy, even though it receive the seed, doth not conceive. This mind which first gives it birth, further to adorn its present and also for love of the friend who receives it, does not restrain itself within the limits of the truth, but passes beyond them. And when it passes beyond them in order to adorn its utterances, it speaks against conscience; when it is the illusion [60] of love that makes it pass beyond them, it does not speak against it. The second mind, which receives it thus, is not contented to abide by the dilating of the first mind, but sets about to adorn its own report (as being its own proper effect in the matter), and so, both for the sake of so adorning it, and also by means of the illusion which it receives from the love begotten in it, it makes the dilation more ample than it was when it came to it; and this in concord and in discord with conscience, as before. And the like doth [70] the third receiving mind, and the fourth; and so to infinity it dilates. And in like manner, reversing the aforesaid causes, we may see the reason why infamy is magnified in like fashion. Wherefore Virgil saith in the fourth of the *Æneid* 'that



fame lives by moving, and grows by going.' **On the  
dilation  
of fame**  
Clearly then may who so will perceive that the image begotten by fame alone [80] is ever more ample, whatsoever it may be, than the imagined thing in its true state.

11, 12. For the occasional difficulty of this comment, compare IV. 21 : 49 ff.

24, 25. '*Up to the apex of my life.*' That is till he was thirty-five. Compare IV. 23 : 65-110, and *Inferno*, I. 1. The indication is not precise, since Dante was in his 37th year when banished.

25-28. Compare *Paradiso*, XXV. 1-9, and Dante's first *Eclogue*, 42-44.

30-33. Compare the *Epistle* to Can Grande, lines 600, 601; and *Paradiso*, XVII. 52-60, in which latter passage, as here, Dante complains that the infamy of an outrage usually cleaves to the outraged rather than to the outrageous.

50-60. The only way in which it seems possible to extract a satisfactory sense for this passage is to take the 'present' as made not to the person who receives the good report, but to the person whom the good report concerns, for so only can the 'illusion of love' be regarded as honest and disinterested, and the parallel between the first and the second 'dilation' be maintained. The receiving mind conceives the good opinion and 'presents' it (though not directly) to its father.

## CHAPTER IV

[( $\beta$ ) But a man's familiar presence lowers our conception of him (i.) because most of us, with childish inconsequence, when we see that a man's outward form does not correspond to the image we had made of it, at once suppose that our idea of his significance was equally at fault; (ii.) because, when we see a man, he strikes us as not so very different from ourselves; and we become envious of his reputation, as a saint or sinner, which we think we might be able to rival; and (iii.) familiar presence reveals some weakness or blemish which throws a shadow on the lustre of a man's greatness, or reveals some amiable quality which detracts from his reputation as a villain. Wherefore, since the author is familiarly known to almost all the Italians, he feels it incumbent upon him, by way of counterpoise, to maintain a certain loftiness and severity of style in his work. Hence its difficulty.]

On the contempt of familiarity  $\beta$ . THE reason having now been shewn why fame dilates the good and the evil beyond their true magnitude, it remains in this chapter to shew the reasons which reveal to us why a man's presence contracts them in the other direction; and when these have been shewn we shall easily advance to our main purpose, which concerns the above-mentioned excuse. I say, then, that for three causes presence makes a person count for less than his real worth. The first [10] of which is childishness, I do not mean of age but of mind; the second is envy; and these two exist in the judge. The third is the alloy of humanity, and this is in the person judged.

i. The first can be briefly discoursed of thus: The greater part of men live after sense and not

after reason, like children; and such [20] know not things save only on their outer surface, and their excellence, which has reference to their due end, they do not see, because they have the eyes of their reason shut, which penetrate to the perception of that end. Whence they quickly perceive every thing that they can perceive at all, and judge according to their vision. And because they form a certain opinion on the strength of a man's fame, by hearsay, wherefrom in the man's presence the [30] imperfect judgment, which judges not after reason but after sense alone, is at variance, they hold all that they have heard before to be a lie, and despise the person whom before they prized. Wherefore with such as these (and almost everyone is such) a man's presence makes the one and the other quality shrink. Such as these are quickly set a-longing and are quickly satisfied; they are often rejoiced and often saddened with brief delights and glooms; and they quickly become [40] friends and quickly enemies. They do all things like children, without use of reason.

On light-  
ness of  
mind

The second may be understood by these considerations: Likeness, in the vicious, is the cause of envy, and envy is the cause of hostile judgment, because it suffers not reason to plead on behalf of the object of envy; and the power of judgment is then like to the judge who listens only to one side. Wherefore, when such as these see the famous [50] person, they are straightway envious, because they look upon his members and upon his faculties, which are like their own, and they fear, because of the excel-

The alloy of humanity  
 lence of such a one, to be the less prized. And these not only pass a hostile judgment under the influence of passion, but, by defaming, cause others also to pass a hostile judgment. Wherefore with them presence makes the good and the ill in every one presented to them shrink; and I say 'the ill' because many, taking delight in [60] ill deeds, envy ill-doers.

- iii. The third is the alloy of humanity, which has its source in him who is judged, and works not save by some familiarity and intercourse. To make which clear be it known that man is blemished in many directions, and as Augustine saith 'no man is without blemish.' One while the man is blemished by some passion, which [70], may be, he cannot resist; another while he is blemished by some distorted member; and another by some stroke of fortune; or he is blemished by the infamy of his parents or of someone nigh of kin to him. Which things are not borne by fame; but by the man's presence, and by his intercourse he reveals them; and these blemishes throw some shadow over the brightness of his excellence so as to make it seem less clear and [80] less worthy. And this is why every prophet is less honoured in his own country; this is why a man of excellence should grant his presence to few and his intimacy to fewer, that his name may have acceptance and not be despised. And this third cause may operate in the case of evil as well as good if each element in the argument concerning it be turned the opposite way. Wherefore it is [90] clearly seen that, because of the alloy from which no man is free, presence contracts

the good and the ill in every man further than truth wills.

Wherefore, because, as said above, I have exposed myself to nearly all the Italians, and therefore have perchance cheapened myself more than the truth wills, not only to them whom my reputation has reached, but to others also, whereby all that [100] I have done has doubtless been more lightly esteemed together with myself, it behoves me to give something of weight to the present work by a loftier style, that it may seem a thing of more authority. And let this excuse for the severity of my comment suffice.

The  
author's  
wander-  
ings

16-41. Compare I. 11 : 14-70 ; and IV. 15 : 151-167.

43. Compare I. 11 : 112-117.

82-84. Compare II. 1 : 49-51 ; and Villani's assertion that Dante himself was reserved.

## CHAPTER V

[(II.) Having apologised for certain *qualities* of his work, the author proceeds to excuse its *texture*, which is Italian and not Latin. This is (*a*) to avoid a harsh inversion ; (*b*) to give scope to the zeal of his generosity ; (*c*) to gratify his love of his native language. (*a*) A commentary should be subservient to its text and should therefore be (*a*) self subordinating ; (*β*) sympathetic in its insight and range ; (*γ*) flexible to the demands of the text. And (*a*) it were harsh and unnatural for Latin to subordinate itself to Italian, because (i.) the dignity of its fixed vocabulary and forms ; (ii.) its power of adequately handling every subject, and (iii.) the beauty of its elaborated structure, all make it the superior of the fluctuating, limited naïve Italian.]

An apology for a vernacular comment

Now that this bread has been cleansed of the accidental blemishes it remains to apologise for a substantial one, to wit, that it is vernacular and not Latin, which by similitude may be called oaten instead of wheaten. And in brief

II. *a, b, c.* the apology consists in three considerations which moved me to choose this rather than the other. The first springs from the desire to avoid undue inversion [10] of order ; the second from zealous liberality ; the third from natural love of one's own speech. And these reasons, and the grounds on which they rest, that I may satisfy the objections that might be urged on the aforesaid ground, I purpose duly to discuss in fashion as follows.

*a.* That which most adorns and commends the doings of man, and which most directly leads them to a prosperous end, is the habit [20] of

those dispositions which are ordained to the end in view; as, for instance, courage of mind and strength of body are ordained to the end of chivalry. And so he who is appointed to the service of another should have those dispositions which are ordained to that end, to wit subjection, knowledge, and obedience, without which a man is not duly disposed for service. For if he be not subject in all his conditions [30] he ever goeth irksomely and heavily in his service, and seldom continueth therein; and if he be not obedient he serveth not save at his own discretion and will, which is rather the service of a friend than of a servant. Wherefore to avoid this inversion of order it behoves this comment, which is made to be servant of the odes hereinafter written, to be subject to them in its whole ordainment; and it should have [40] acquaintance with the affairs of its lord; and should be obedient to him; all which dispositions would be lacking to it were it Latin and not vernacular, seeing that the odes are vernacular.

For firstly, if it were Latin it would not be subject but sovrain, both by reason of nobility and of virtue and of beauty. Of nobility, because Latin is stable and uncorruptible and the vernacular is unstable and [50] corruptible. Wherefore we see in the ancient writings of the Latin comedies and tragedies, which cannot be changed, that same speech that we have to-day; and this is not the case with the vernacular, which takes fashion at our will, and changes. Whence we see in the cities of Italy, if we choose to look closely, that within fifty years from now many words have been quenched and born and changed,

Servant  
and  
master

$\alpha, \beta, \gamma.$

$\alpha.$   
i. ii. iii.

i.



The and if a short time makes [60] so much change  
 virtue of far more change does greater time effect. So  
 Latin that I assert that if they who parted from  
 this life a thousand years ago were to return  
 to their cities they would believe them to be  
 inhabited by a strange folk, because of the  
 tongue discordant from their own. Of this I  
 shall discourse more at large elsewhere, in a  
 book which I intend to make, God granting,  
 concerning *Vernacular Discourse* [70].

ii. Further, Latin were sovran rather than  
 subject, by reason of its virtue. Everything  
 hath virtue of nature which accomplishes that  
 for which it was ordained; and the better it  
 doth it the more virtue it hath. Whence we  
 call the man virtuous who lives in the life of  
 contemplation or action to which he is naturally  
 ordained; we speak of the equine virtue of  
 pacing swift and far, whereto the horse is or-  
 dained; we speak of the virtue of a [80] sword  
 which smartly cuts things hard, whereto it is  
 ordained. Thus speech, which is ordained to  
 manifest human conceptions hath virtue when it  
 doth this thing; and that speech hath the most  
 virtue which doth it most. Wherefore since  
 Latin revealeth many things conceived in the  
 mind which the vernacular may not reveal (as  
 they know who have the habit of the one speech  
 and the other), its virtue is more than that of the  
 [90] vernacular.

iii. Again, it were sovran rather than subject  
 by reason of its beauty. Men call that thing  
 beautiful the parts whereof duly correspond,  
 because from their harmony pleasure results.  
 Wherefore we think a man beautiful when his



members duly correspond to each other ; and we call singing beautiful when the voices correspond mutually according to the requirements [100] of the art. Therefore that speech is the more beautiful wherein [the words] correspond more duly [and they correspond more duly] in Latin than in the vernacular, because the vernacular followeth use and the Latin art ; wherefore it is admitted to be of more beauty, of more virtue, and of more nobility. And hereby the chief contention of this discourse is established, to wit that a Latin comment would not have been the subject of the odes but their sovran.

The nobility of Latin

The long discussion of the relation which a Latin commentary (had it been written) would have borne to the text, will probably strike the reader at first as purely fantastical, and will attract him, if at all, only by its quaintness, and by the shrewdness or humour incidentally displayed in treating of human relationships. There is, however, a genuine underlying thought which I have endeavoured to bring out in the arguments to this and the next following chapters. The principle maintained is that the atmosphere of the commentary should be as far as possible harmonious with that of the text. The reader should be kept approximately on the same plane, whichever he is reading, and should not find himself violently hurled out of one world and into another, as he passes from text to commentary. Much light will be thrown on the whole question by a consideration of the inverse problem that has arisen in our own day as to whether it is well to comment on classical texts in modern European languages or only in Latin. The verdict seems to have been conclusively given in favour of the vernacular, but any scholar who has been accustomed to read Latin commentaries on Latin authors (and still more those who are familiar with Greek commentaries on Greek texts as well) will admit the disturbing effect of the constant breaking of the linguistic atmosphere ; and it is impossible to read a commentary

on a classic in a *foreign* modern language without feeling the provincial limitations which the commentator has imposed upon himself, or without the sense that, though he may thereby lighten his own task, he does not essentially widen the area of his appeal, even within the range of his own language, while woefully contracting it everywhere else. His vehicle, as Dante would say, errs both by excess and defect, since he offers to many of his own countrymen what they cannot take, and withholds from many of his fellow scholars what they would gladly have. His procedure is an intrusion of nationality upon a region where the natural divisions are not national. Dante maintains that his Latin commentary would suffer from the inverse fault of allowing the division between the literate and illiterate, in the technical sense, to obtrude itself into a region where it is irrelevant, and where the divisions of nationality, which it ignores, are natural and relevant.

2, 3. *Accidental* and *substantial* are here used in their technical sense. A 'substance' is anything that exists on its own account; and an 'accident' is anything that can only exist as an attribute or experience of something else. A tree, a soul, or a chest is a substance. Whiteness, immortality, weight, love, are accidents. To be egotistical or obscure is a quality; but to be an Italian commentary is to be *a different thing* from a Latin commentary.

11. The Italian *pronto* and *prontezza* correspond to the Greek *πρόθυμος* and *πρόθυμια*. The ideas of zeal, eagerness, alacrity and spontaneity are conveyed by the words.

19. *Habit*. See note on I. 1: 15.

23. Compare IV. 9: 169-173.

50-52. It was Dante's deliberate conviction that Latin was a conventional language, adopted for the purpose of stability and universality, by way of counteracting the effects of the Tower of Babel. In a word, Latin was regarded by Dante as a successful attempt to secure the objects contemplated by the apostles of Volapuk or Esperanto, see *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, I. 9: especially 93-107. Widely as this view departs from our own conceptions it appears to have at least this foundation in fact, that the Latin of Cicero and Vergil was highly conventionalised, under literary influences, and that the spoken Latin was

much nearer to Italian than is generally imagined. It is strange, however, that Dante could have maintained, even conventionally, that there was anything approaching to complete fixity in the literary Latin. In II. 14 : 83-89, he dwells expressly on the fluctuations of literary Latin, quoting the well-known passage from Horace's *Ars Poetica*, 60-71. A passage which is evidently in his mind again in *Paradiso*, XXVI. 137, 138. See further note to *Paradiso*, XVI. 33, in the 'Temple Classics' *Dante*.

47-70. Note that in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, I. 1 : 35-41, Dante declares the vernaculars to be 'nobler' than the grammars, or classical languages. On lines 68, 69, compare *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, I. 9 : 44-93 ; and see Appendix, p. 424.

74-77. Compare IV. 22 : 103-210.

## CHAPTER VI

[(β) The man who writes a Latin commentary on a vernacular text (i.) deliberately renounces the medium that can best follow every turn of expression that is to be illustrated, in favour of one that stands in a neutral relation to all national idioms and has no innate sympathy with the one in question ; and (ii.) arbitrarily withholds his services from all readers of the text who are not Latinists, and by thus disobliging many of the lovers of the literature he is professing to serve he throws an indirect slight upon it.]

HAVING shown how the present comment would not have been subject to the odes, had it been in Latin, it remains to show that it would not have been familiar with them nor obedient to them ; and then the conclusion will follow that to avoid undue inversion of order it was needful to speak in the vernacular.

On the ways of masters

- On unwise masters
- β. The servant's familiarity with his master is chiefly needed in order to give him perfect understanding of two things. The first is the nature of his master; for there be masters of such asinine nature that they order the contrary of what they desire; and others who desire to be served and understood without giving orders at all; and others who will not have the servant go about to do any needful thing except they [20] command it. And why there be such varieties amongst men I do not purpose at present to expound (for it would make the digression too multiplex) save so far as to say generically that such are little other than beasts, who have small good of their reason. Wherefore if the servant does not understand his master's nature it is manifest that he cannot perfectly serve him. The second thing is that the servant must needs be acquainted with his [30] master's friends, for otherwise he could neither honour nor serve them, and so would not perfectly serve his own master; for friends are as it were parts of a single whole, that whole being unity in willing and in not willing. Now the Latin comment would not have had knowledge of these things, whereas the vernacular itself has.
- i. ii. That Latin hath no familiarity with the vernacular and its [40] friends is thus proved: To know a thing generically is not to know it perfectly; just as he who perceives an animal afar off has no perfect understanding of it, not knowing whether it be dog or wolf or goat.

Latin has cognisance of vernacular speech generically, but not in its distinctions, for if it recognised its distinctions it would recognise all the vernaculars, since there is no reason why it should recognise one more than [50] another. And therefore if any man had acquired complete command of Latin, he would enjoy discriminating familiarity with vernacular speech. But this is not so, for he who has perfect command of Latin, if he be of Italy, does not recognise the vernacular of the German; nor if a German, the Italian or the Provençal. Whence it is manifest that Latin is not familiar with vernacular speech. Again, it is not familiar with ii. its friends; because it is impossible to [60] know the friends having no knowledge of the principal; wherefore if Latin is not acquainted with the vernacular (and it has been shown above that it is not) it is impossible for it to be acquainted with its friends. Again, without intercourse and familiarity it is impossible to be acquainted with men, and Latin hath not intercourse with so many in any tongue as the vernacular of that tongue hath, to which they all are friends; and consequently it cannot [70] know the friends of the vernacular. And this is not contradicted by what might be urged, namely, that Latin does converse with certain of the friends of the vernacular; for it is not therefore familiar with them all, and so it is not completely acquainted with the said friends; and it is complete and not defective knowledge that is needed.

Latin and  
the ver-  
naculars

The reader should be warned that the Italian *conoscente*

and *connoscenza* which run through this chapter have been rendered by a great variety of English words, 'acquaintance,' 'familiarity,' 'understanding,' 'recognition,' 'knowledge.'

In this chapter Dante seems to have been led by his illustration further away from his subject than usual. The details can hardly be regarded as significant, but the general idea is a sound one, and its truth will be recognised by all who are familiar, for instance, with the Latin commentaries on the *Comedy*. In the use of Latin there is a fraudulent appearance of standing on higher ground, whereas really the special resources of Italian for explaining Italian are forfeited and nothing is gained (for it is only the Italian scholar, after all, limited by his comprehension of Italian, that speaks under the cloak of the Latinist), while there is a perpetual tone of condescension—sometimes amounting almost to insolence—in the way in which the classical language stoops to explain the upstart Italian.

The only compensation is that the technical terms of philosophy are easier to grasp and handle in Latin than Italian; and even this Dante ingeniously turns into another disqualification, as we shall see under  $\gamma$ , ii.

45-58. The Latinist must be aware, in a general way, that there is such a thing as a man's mother tongue (and each Latinist, though not *qua* Latinist, must be acquainted with his own mother tongue), but his knowledge of Latin does not, in itself, enable him so much as to distinguish between German and Provençal.

## CHAPTER VII

[(γ) The Latin commentary would have lacked flexible self-adaption to the text (i.) because of the harshness already indicated of the more dignified language being under command to the less dignified; (ii.) because there is no real subordination in going your own way even if someone tells you to do it; and as a knowledge of Latin already involves the understanding of much that the commentary is to explain, there would be no real lending of itself to the text on the part of the Latin commentary; and (iii.) it would fail, by excess and defect, to adapt itself to the demands of a poetic text, for such a text would naturally require that all they, and only they, who could feel it as poetry should have its sense expounded, whereas Latin would expound it to many (foreigners) who could not feel its beauty, and would fail to expound it to many (natives) who could.]

HAVING shown that the Latin comment would not have served with understanding, I will tell how it would not have been obedient. He is obedient who possesses that excellent disposition which is called obedience. True obedience must needs have three things, without which it may not be. It must be sweet, not bitter; and completely under command, not self-moved; and measured, not out of [10] measure. The which three things it were impossible for the Latin comment to have, and therefore it were impossible for it to be obedient.

That it would have been impossible for the Latin to be obedient is manifested by the argument that follows. Whatsoever proceeds in inverted order is irksome, and therefore bitter and i.

On obedi-  
ence

γ.

i. ii. iii.



Still on not sweet ; like sleeping by day and watching by  
 obedi- night, or going backwards and not forwards.  
 ence For the subject to command the sovrán is pro-  
 ceeding in inverted order ; for the right order  
 is for the sovrán [20] to command the subject :  
 wherefore it is bitter and not sweet. And since  
 it is impossible sweetly to obey a bitter command,  
 it is impossible when the subject commands for  
 the obedience of the sovrán to be sweet. Where-  
 fore if the Latin is sovrán of the vernacular, as  
 has been shown above by many arguments, and  
 the odes which take the place of commanders  
 are vernacular, it is impossible that their [30]  
 relation should be sweet.

ii. Further, obedience is wholly commanded and  
 in no part self-moved when he who does a thing  
 in obedience would not, unless commanded, have  
 done it of his own motion either in whole or in  
 part. Wherefore if I were ordered to bear two  
 cloaks on my back, and should have borne one  
 without orders, I say that [40] my obedience is  
 not wholly under command, but is in part self-  
 moved. And such would have been the obedi-  
 ence of the Latin comment ; and consequently  
 it would not have been an obedience wholly  
 under command. That it would have been  
 such appears hereby, that Latin without the  
 command of this master would have expounded  
 many parts of his meaning (and actually expounds  
 it, if anyone closely inspect writings that are  
 written in Latin) which [50] the vernacular  
 does not in any degree.

iii. Again, obedience is measured and not out of  
 measure when it goes to the edge of the com-  
 mand and not beyond it ; just as particular



nature is obedient to universal nature when it gives a man thirty-two teeth, neither more nor less; and when it gives five fingers to the hand, neither more nor less; and man is obedient to justice [when he does what she] commands to the evil-doer. Now this the [60] Latin would not have done, but would have sinned not only in defect and not only in excess, but in both; and thus its obedience would have been not measured but out of measure, and consequently it would not have been obedient. That Latin would not have filled out its master's command, and that it would also have exceeded it may easily be shown. This master, to wit these odes, to which [70] this comment is ordained as servant, command and will that they be expounded to all such to whom their meaning can so come that when they speak they shall be understood. And no one doubts that if they could utter their commands in words this is what they would order. Now Latin would only have expounded them to the lettered, for others would not have understood it. Wherefore inasmuch as there are far [80] more unlettered than lettered who desire to understand them, it follows that Latin would not have fully accomplished their order, as doth the vernacular, which is understood alike by the lettered and the unlettered. Moreover, Latin would have expounded them to folk of another tongue, such as Germans and English and others; and here it would have exceeded their command. For, speaking at large, I declare that it would have been against their will that their meaning should be expounded [90] where they themselves could not carry it together with their

On  
measured  
obedience

On trans-  
lations of  
poetry

beauty. And therefore let everyone know that nothing which hath the harmony of musical connection can be transferred from its own tongue into another without shattering all its sweetness and harmony. And this is the reason why Homer is not translated from Greek into Latin, as are the other writings that we have of theirs; and this is the reason why the verses of the Psalter are without the sweetness of [100] music and of harmony, for they were translated from Hebrew into Greek, and from Greek into Latin, and in the first translation all their sweetness perished. And thus is the conclusion reached which was promised at the beginning of the chapter immediately before this.

18. *Going backwards and not forwards.* Compare *Inferno*, XX. 1-30.

44-50. What I take to be the general meaning of this passage is set forth in the argument; but possibly it may also have some reference to grammatical questions which could not be discussed in Latin without much artificiality. Compare IV. 25:123-126. In 'Et suam personam adornat,' *adornat* would not be open to the ambiguity of the Italian *adorna*, which may be—(1) an adjective; (2) 2nd person imperative; (3) 3rd person indicative. A Latin comment, equivalent to the Italian comment given by Dante on this word, would involve somewhat elaborate precautions to prevent the difficulty from disappearing before it had been explained, which the vernacular might resent, something as a man who stammers resents having his sentence finished for him by his interlocutor.

53-58. The distinction between universal nature and particular nature is frequently insisted on by the Schoolmen with reference to both physical and spiritual things. Thus disease is 'unnatural' to the diseased creature, but yet is part of the 'natural' sequence of cause and effect taken generally. God, in his dealings with his creatures, sometimes enables them to transcend the limits of their

'particular' nature, but what happens then cannot be called 'unnatural' in the absolute sense. Indeed, ultimately 'what God gives to anything is its nature.'

The 'better,' the 'higher' or the 'most universal' nature may be used as a circumlocution for God. Compare *Purgatorio*, XVI. 79; *De Monarchia*, I. 1:2.

77 ff. *Letteratus* and *non-letteratus*, which I have rendered *lettered* and *unlettered*, are the technical terms for those who understand Latin and those who do not. 'Scis litteras?' for example, means, 'Do you understand Latin?'

84-91. It must surely be impossible for any translator to handle this passage without a sharp sense of compunction and an involuntary desire to propitiate the injured shade of Dante. May I exhort my readers to make use of this translation not as a substitute for the original, but as a stepping-stone to the enjoyment of that 'beauty' which alone can bring full understanding of Dante's work? Thus, to speak with Boccaccio, may I excuse myself before Dante, 'who perchance looks down upon me, as I write, with an eye of scorn, from some lofty region of heaven.'

96. All Dante's quotations from Homer are taken at second hand from the Latin translations of Aristotle.

## CHAPTER VIII

[(b) The giver who has a true zeal for giving will confer gifts ( $\alpha$ ) on many, ( $\beta$ ) with thoughtful care that they shall be appropriate, ( $\gamma$ ) spontaneously. For ( $\alpha$ ) there is a divine inclusiveness in widely-extended gifts, and ( $\beta$ ) though a gift as such may shew the giver's friendship, yet it leaves the dissatisfied sense of a lost opportunity if it is not appropriate; and a discriminating gift (i.) has a certain cheeriness alike for giver and receiver; (ii.) objectively considered has the merit of moving a thing to where it is more wanted and where accordingly it has an increased significance; (iii.) impresses itself more profoundly on the receiver's mind and therefore

better increases friendship in the world, and (iv.) has the grace of an unforced air, as though it were the natural thing, not brought about by strain and effort. ( $\gamma$ ) The giver who gives not spontaneously, but puts the receiver to begging, destroys the virtue of his gift by the bitter price of prayers which he extorts; a price which enriches him not, though it beggar the other.]

**Zeal of liberality** Now that it has been shown by sufficient reasons how, to avoid undue inversion of order, the aforesaid odes must needs have a vernacular and not a Latin comment to reveal and expound

*b* I. them, I purpose to show how zealous liberality likewise made me choose the one and drop the other. Zealous liberality, then, is marked by three things which cleave to this [10] vernacular and would not have cleft to the Latin.

*a, \beta, \gamma*. The first is giving to many, the second is giving things useful, the third is giving the gift without its being asked. For to give to and to help one is good, but to give to and to help many is zealous goodness, inasmuch as it taketh its likeness from the benefactions of God, who is the most universal benefactor. And, moreover, it is impossible to give to many without giving to one, inasmuch as one is included in many; [20] but it is entirely possible to give to one without giving to many. Wherefore he who helps many doth the one good deed and the other; he who helps one doth the one good deed only; whence we see the makers of the laws keeping their eyes chiefly fixed on the general good in making them.

*\beta*. Again, to give things that are of no use to him who receives them is indeed good, in so far

as he who gives shows at least his friendship; but it is not perfectly good and so is not zealous giving; [30] as if a knight should give a shield to a doctor, and the doctor should give a copy of the *Aphorisms* of Hippocrates or the *Art* of Galen to the knight; wherefore the wise say that the face of the gift ought to resemble that of the receiver, that is to say should be suitable to him, and should be useful; and herein is the liberality deemed zealous of the man who is thus discerning in his gifts.

On usefulness in gifts

[40] But inasmuch as moral counsellings are wont to create a desire to investigate their origin, in this chapter I purpose briefly to expound four reasons why a gift must needs be useful to him who receives it in order that there may be zealous liberality therein. i. ii. iii. iv

Firstly, because virtue should be cheerful, and not gloomy in its every act. Wherefore, if the gift be not cheerful in the giving and in the [50] receiving, there is not perfect nor zealous virtue in it. This cheerfulness nought else can secure save utility, which abides in the giver by the giving and which comes to the receiver by the receiving. The giver then must show foresight in so doing that on his side remains the utility of the comeliness which is above all utility; and in so doing that to the receiver shall go over the utility of the use of the thing given; and thus the one and the other will be [60] cheerful, and consequently there will be more zealous liberality.

Secondly, because virtue should always move things for the better. Thus, as it would be a blameworthy action to make a spade out of a

The beautiful sword, or to make a beautiful goblet out of a beautiful lyre, so it is blameworthy to move a thing from a place where it is useful and bear it to a place where it will be less useful. And, because futile action is [70] blameworthy, it is blameworthy not only to put a thing where it will be less useful but also to put it where it will be equally useful. Wherefore, in order that the changing of things may be praiseworthy it must ever be for the better because it should aim at being praiseworthy in the highest degree; and the gift cannot effect this except it become more dear by the change; nor can it become more dear except it become more useful [80] for the receiver to use than the giver. Whence the conclusion follows that the gift must be useful to him who receives it in order that there may be zealous liberality in the giving.

- iii. Thirdly, because the operation of virtue ought in itself to acquire friends; since our life has need of such, and the end of virtue is that our life should be satisfied. Wherefore, in order that the gift may make the receiver [90] friendly, it should be useful to him, because utility stamps the memory with the image of the gift: which same is the food of friendship; and it stamps it the more strongly in measure as the utility is greater; wherefore Martin is wont to say, 'I shall not forget the present which John made me.' So that, in order for its proper virtue to reside in the gift, to wit liberality, and for it to be zealous, the gift must be useful to him who receives it.
- iv. [100] Finally, because virtue should be free and not constrained in its action. Action is

free when a person goes spontaneously in any direction, and it is shown by his turning his face that way. Action is constrained when a man goes against his will, and it is shown in his not looking in the direction in which he is going. Now the gift looks that way when it is directed to the need of him who receives it. And since it cannot be directed [110] thereto unless it be useful, in order that the virtue may be free in its action the gift must have free course in the direction in which it travels together with the receiver; and consequently the utility of the receiver must be comprised in the gift in order that there may be zealous liberality in it.

Spon-  
taneity in  
giving

The third thing wherein zealous liberality  $\gamma$ . may be noted is giving without being asked; because when a thing is asked for, then the transaction is, on one side, not a matter of virtue but of commerce, inasmuch as he who receives buys, though he who gives sells not; wherefore Seneca [120] saith 'that nothing is bought more dear than that on which prayers are spent.' Wherefore, in order that there may be zealous liberality in the gift, and that it may be noted therein, it behoves that it be clear of every feature of merchandise; and so the gift must be unasked. Why the thing begged for costs so dear I do not propose [130] to discourse of here, because it will be sufficiently discoursed of in the last treatise of this book.

33. *Hippocrates* (460-357 B.C.) was the greatest of Greek physicians. His *Aphorisms* were well-known in the later middle ages. Compare *Paradiso*, XI. 4. Few sayings are more familiar than the opening words of the



first aphorism, which runs in its entirety : ' Life is short, but art long ; opportunity is fleeting, experiment risky, judgment hard. Nor must the physician only see to it that he himself works right, but also that the patient, the nurses, and the external appliances, do.' *Galen* (130-200 A.D.). He commented on Hippocrates and wrote numerous works of his own. His *τέχνη* preserved its Greek name (in the corrupt form of *Tegni*) in the translations.

56. *Comeliness*. The Latin *honestum* and *honestas* have long been the despair of translators. The Italian *onesto* and *onestade* add difficulties of their own. The word is here used in contrast to ' utility,' as signifying that which is inherently worthy, noble, or fitting.

94. For this use of John and Martin see III. 11 : 67. Compare *Paradiso*, XIII. 139.

120-132. This identifies *Ode XIV.* as the text of the fifteenth treatise. See lines 119-122.

## CHAPTER IX

[Now had the author made the gift of a Latin commentary it would have had none of the three marks of zeal, whereas the Italian has them all. For (α) the Latin would only have served those few Italian scholars who have a true love of literature for its own sake and not for gain, whereas the Italian commentary will serve the many Italian men of affairs, and women, who care for the high themes to be therein discussed, but have no knowledge of Latin. And accordingly (β) a Latin commentary would have been a useless gift, for only one scholar here and there has any interest in the knowledge and virtue it is to inculcate, whereas the seeds of true nobleness are in the hearts of many readers of the vernacular. And (γ) there is the freshness of spontaneity in the unexpected Italian commentary, whereas Latin commentaries so often have the laboured air of things done because they are conventionally expected.]



Now from all the three above-named conditions, which must unite in order that zealous liberality may reside in a benefaction, the Latin commentary would have been remote, whereas the vernacular is accompanied by them, as may be manifestly demonstrated thus: The Latin would not have served many; for (if we call to mind what was said above) lettered men who have not the [10] Italian tongue could not have enjoyed this service. And as for those who have this tongue (should we choose to examine closely who they are), we shall find that they would have been served by it perhaps in the proportion of one to a thousand; for the rest would not have received it, so zealous are they towards avarice, which parts them from all nobility of mind, which is the chief cause for desiring this food. And in reproof of them I say that they ought not to be called lettered [20] because they do not acquire literature for its own use, but just in so far as they may gain money or office by it; just as we ought not to call him a harper who hath a harp in his house to hire out for a price, and not to use it to play upon. Returning then to the main proposition, <sup>α.</sup> I say that it is clear enough how the Latin would have conferred its benefit upon few, whereas verily the vernacular will be of service to many. For [30] goodness of mind, which awaits this service, is to be found in them who, by the grievous disuse of the world, have abandoned literature to such as have made her a harlot instead of a lady; which noble ones are princes, barons and knights, and many other noble folk, not only men but women, of which

Sordid  
pursuit of  
learning

b 2.

α, β, γ.

Lettered men and women alike there are many of this and un-lettered tongue who command the vernacular but are not lettered.

β. Further, Latin would not have been the [40] giver of a useful gift which the vernacular will be; because nothing is useful save in so far as it is used; nor does its excellence consist in potentiality which is not perfected existence; as in the case of gold, gems and other treasures which be buried—albeit those which are in the hand of a miser are in a baser place than is the earth wherein the treasure is hidden. Now what this comment gives verily is the meaning of the odes [50], for which purpose it is made; the principal design whereof is to lead men to knowledge and virtue, as will be seen in the progress of the treatment of them. Of this meaning none can avail themselves save such in whom true nobility is sown, after the fashion which will be related in the fourth treatise; and almost all of these command the vernacular only, even as those noble ones named above in this chapter. And this is not contradicted by [60] a lettered man here and there being one of them; for as saith my master Aristotle in the first of the *Ethics*, ‘one swallow does not make spring.’ It is plain then that the vernacular will give a useful thing, whereas the Latin would not have given it.

γ. Further, the vernacular will give a gift un-asked, which the Latin would not have done; for it will give itself as a commentary, which was never yet asked by anyone; and this cannot be said of the [70] Latin, for it has been demanded ere now as commentary and gloss to

many writings, as may be seen clearly at the head of many of the same. And thus it is manifest that zealous liberality moved me to the vernacular rather than to the Latin.

Latin  
commentaries

22 On sordid motives for study, compare III. 11: 102 ff; *Paradiso*, IX. 127-142, XII. 82-87.

32. *Grievous disuse of the world*; i.e., 'the unhappy fact that the laity have given up studying Latin.' Compare the passage in Boccaccio's 'Life,' in which he says that Dante wrote the comedy in Italian, 'Because he perceived that liberal studies were utterly abandoned, especially by princes and other great men to whom poetic toils were wont to be dedicated.'

42 ff. If the text is sound (which may be doubted) Dante must be taken to mean that the potentiality of good is not in itself goodness, only the actualising of good being such. He instances buried gold and gems, but suddenly remembers that their discovery may be the actualising of untold evil rather than of beauty and joy. Compare IV. 11: 36-50.

70 ff. This quaint remark of Dante's is doubtless made in all simplicity, but to the modern student it reads almost like a stroke of satire aimed at the constant protestations of the ecclesiastical writers that they only give publicity to their studies at the earnest entreaty of their friends. Gregory, for instance, in dedicating his colossal commentary on the Book of Job (commonly known as the *Magna Moralia*) to his contemporary, Leander, Bishop of Seville, after telling of his studious conferences with certain brothers, adds, 'and then it pleased the same brothers, supported by your insistence, as you yourself remember, to urge me with pressing request to expound the book of the Blessed Job'; and Augustine tells us that when he was a presbyter in Carthage, certain brothers with whom he had read the *Epistle to the Romans* begged him to commit his remarks to writing, which was the origin of his fragmentary commentary. Such declarations perpetually occur, not only in commentaries, but in treatises like Augustine's *De Trinitate*, Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, Anselm's theological monographs, and so forth.

## CHAPTER X

[Yet all this would scarce serve to excuse or prompt so bold an innovation as an Italian commentary unless supported by (*c*) the author's burning love of his own language, which makes him (*a*) exult in so handling it as to show its undeveloped and unsuspected resources; (*β*) shrink from the possibility of causing clumsy and distorted Italian to be written, as might come to pass should he write his comment in Latin and should some other hand translate it for the vulgar, and (*γ*) desire to strip it of the artificial beauties of verse and display it in the native and unadorned charm of prose, and so give a practical refutation of those miserable Italians who for base reasons of their own, that will be detailed in the next chapter, cry up some other vernacular above their own.]

**Dangers of innovation** GREAT must be the excuse when at a banquet so noble in its viands and so distinguished in its guests, oaten and not wheaten bread is presented; and evident must be the reason which shall make a man depart from that which hath long been observed by others, to wit commenting in Latin. And therefore the reason must be [10] made manifest; for the issue of new things is uncertain, because there hath never been experience thereof, by which things of usage and tradition are regulated both in their progress and in their end. And this is why Reason was moved to command that men should have careful respect of entering on a new path, saying 'that in ordaining new things the reason must be evident which shall make us depart from that which hath long been of use.' Let none [20] marvel then if the digression of my

apology be long, but let him patiently endure its length, as necessary. And following it out I declare that (inasmuch as it hath been shown how I was moved to the vernacular and forsook the Latin commentary, to prevent undue inversion of order, and in zeal of liberality) the order of the whole apology will have me show how I was moved thereto by the natural [30] love of *c* I. my own tongue; which is the third and last reason which moved me to it. Hereto, I say, that natural love chiefly moves the lover to three things; the first is to magnify the loved object, *a*, *β*, *γ*. the next to be jealous for it, the third is to defend it, as everyone may see continually happening. And these three things made me adopt it, to wit the vernacular, for both naturally and incidentally I [40] love it and have loved.

The  
author's  
love of  
Italian

I was moved in the first place to magnify it. *a*. And that herein I do magnify it may be seen by this reason. Albeit things can be magnified, that is made great, by many conditions of greatness, none of them makes so great as the greatness of their own proper excellence, which is the mother and preserver of the other greatnesses. Wherefore a man can have no greatness more [50] than that of the virtuous operation which is his own proper excellence, whereby the greatness of true dignities and of true honours, of true power, of true riches, of true friends, of true and clear fame, are both acquired and preserved. And this greatness do I give to this friend, inasmuch as the excellence which it had in potentiality and in secret I make it have in actuality and publicity, in its own proper [60]

His operation, which is to make manifest the thought  
 jealousy conceived.  
 for Italian

β. I was moved in the second place by jealousy for it. Jealousy for a friend makes a man take anxious thought for his distant future. Wherefore, reflecting that the desire to understand these odes would have induced some unlettered man to have the Latin commentary translated into the vernacular, and fearing lest the vernacular should be set down by one who should make it appear [70] hideous, as did he who translated the Latin of the *Ethics*, I was careful myself to set it down, trusting rather in myself than in another.

γ. I was further moved to defend it from its many detractors who dispraise it and commend the others, especially the Langue d'Oc, saying that this is more beauteous and better than that; departing herein from the truth. [80] For by this comment the great excellence of the vernacular of *Sì* will be perceived, to wit how by it the most lofty and most novel conceptions are expressed, well-nigh as aptly, as adequately, and as gracefully as in Latin itself; for in rhymed compositions, because of the incidental adornments which are inwoven therein, to wit rhyme and rhythm and regulated number, its own excellence cannot be made manifest; no more than the [90] beauty of a woman can when the adornment of decking and of garments brings her more admiration than she brings herself. Wherefore let him who would rightly judge of a woman look on her when only her natural beauty accompanies her, severed from all incidental adornment; even as this comment will

be wherein shall be perceived the smoothness of its syllables, the propriety of its rules, and the sweet [100] discourses that are made of it; all which he who shall rightly consider it will perceive to be full of sweetest and most attractive beauty. But since it is a most effective part of invention to demonstrate the viciousness and malice of the accuser, I will tell, to the confusion of those who accuse the Italian speech, what it is that moves them thereto. And of this I will presently make a separate chapter, that their infamy may be the more conspicuous.

The  
beauty of  
Italian

14. *Reason, i.e., The Roman Law.* *Ragione* is used in Italian to signify either 'reason,' or 'justice,' or the *Code of Justinian*. It may be interesting to note that while English Law aspires to be 'the perfection of common sense,' Roman Law was regarded as reason herself reduced to writing. The phrase in the text is translated from the *Digest*, Book I. Title iv.

70. The translator in question is supposed to be the physician Taddeo mentioned by Dante in *Paradiso XII*. 83 (Toynbee).

77. *Langue d'Oc* = Provençal.

81. *Vernacular of Sì* = Italian.

103. *Invention.* It seems strange that the editors should allow the *intenzione* of the MSS. to stand in the text. If we substituted *defenzione* the translation would be very easy, but probably the real word is *invenzione*. In that case there is a direct reference to Cicero's *De Inventione*, one of the standard books of rhetoric in the middle ages. In Lib. I. cap. 16 of that treatise the reader is shown how he may strengthen his case by bringing his adversary into 'hatred, envy, or contempt.' *Invention* is defined as 'thinking out things, true or verisimilar, to make your cause credible.' (Lib. I. cap. 7.)



## CHAPTER XI

[This depreciation of Italian rests on (i.) mere thoughtless repetition; (ii.) the disingenuous excuses of those who, being unable to handle their language powerfully, say that it is the fault of the language; (iii.) the vanity of those who, being familiar with foreign literatures, exalt them above their own to increase their personal distinction; (iv.) the envious detraction of those who having no literary distinction themselves insidiously detract from that of others about them by slighting its instrument, and (v.) that poverty of spirit which makes a man think that nothing associated with his poor self can be anything but poor.]

- The defamers of Italian
- To the perpetual infamy and suppression of the evil men of Italy who prize the vernacular of another and disprize their own, I declare that their impulse arises from five detestable causes.
- i. ii. iii. iv. v. The first, blindness in discernment; the second, disingenuous excusing; the third, desire of vain-glory; the fourth, the prompting of envy; the fifth and last, [10] abjectness of mind or pusillanimity. And each one of these guilty tendencies has so great a following that there be few exempt from them.
- i. Of the first one may thus discourse: like as the sensitive part of the mind hath its eyes whereby it apprehendeth the difference of things in so far as they are coloured externally, even so hath the rational part its eye whereby it apprehendeth the [20] difference of things in so far as they be ordained to some certain end; and this same eye is discernment. And like as he who is blind with the eyes of sense must ever judge of evil or good



according to others, so he who is blind of the light of discernment must ever follow in his judgment after mere report, true or false. And so, whensoever the leader is blind, he himself, and also the one, blind likewise, who [30] leaneth upon him, must needs come to an evil end. Wherefore it is written, that the blind shall lead the blind and so shall they both fall into the ditch. Now this same report hath long been counter to our vernacular, for reasons which will be discoursed of below. Following the which, the blind ones spoken of above, who are almost without number, with their hands upon the shoulders of these liars, have fallen into the ditch of the false opinion from which they know not how [40] to escape. To the habit of this light of discernment the populace are specially blinded, because they are occupied from the beginning of their lives with some trade, and so direct their minds to it, by force of necessity, that they give heed to nought else. And because the habit of a virtue, whether moral or intellectual, may not be had of a sudden, but must needs be acquired by practice, and they [50] devote their practice to some art, and are not careful to discern other things, it is impossible for them to have discernment. Wherefore it comes to pass that they often cry long live their death and death to their life, if only some one raise the cry. And this is the most perilous defect involved in their blindness. Wherefore Boethius considers popular glory an empty thing, because he sees that it has no discernment. Such are to be regarded as sheep and not men; for if [60] one sheep were to fling itself over a

Sheeplike  
opinion

Dis-precipice of a thousand paces all the others  
 ingenuous would go after it ; and if one sheep leap for any  
 excuses reason as it passes a street all the others leap,  
 although they see nothing to leap over. And  
 ere now I myself have seen one after another  
 leap into a well because one leapt into it (think-  
 ing, I suppose, that it was leaping over a wall),  
 although the shepherd, wailing and shouting, set  
 himself with [70] arms and breast before them.

- ii. The second sect who oppose our vernacular  
 is made up by disingenuous excusings. There  
 are many who love to be thought masters rather  
 than to be such ; and to avoid the opposite (to  
 wit, not being thought such) they ever find fault  
 with the material of their art that is furnished  
 them, or else the instrument ; for example, a  
 bad smith finds fault with the iron furnished him,  
 and a bad harper [80] finds fault with the harp,  
 thinking to throw the blame of the bad knife or  
 the bad music upon the iron and upon the harp,  
 and to remove it from himself. And in like  
 manner there be some, and they are not few, who  
 would have men think them poets ; and to excuse  
 themselves for not poetising, or for poetising  
 badly, they accuse and blame the material, to wit  
 their own vernacular, and praise that of others,  
 which they are not required to forge. And if  
 anyone would see how far this iron is really  
 [90] to be blamed, let him look upon the works  
 which the good artificers make from it, and he  
 will recognise the disingenuousness of those who  
 by blaming it think to excuse themselves.  
 Against such as these Tully cries out in the  
 beginning of a book of his, which is called the  
 book *Concerning the Goal of Good* ; because in

his time they found fault with the Latin of the Romans and commended the Grammar of the Greeks, for the like reasons for which these others now make the Italian speech cheap and [100] that of Provence precious. Vanity  
and envy

The third sect against our vernacular is made up by desire of vainglory. There are many who by handling things composed in some tongue not their own, and by commending the said tongue, look to be more admired than by handling things in their own tongue. And doubtless it is a matter of some praise of intellect rightly to apprehend a foreign tongue; but it is blameworthy to commend it beyond the truth, in order to vaunt oneself for such [110] acquirement.

The fourth is made up by the prompting of envy. As was said above, there is envy wherever there is similarity. Amongst men of one tongue there is similarity in vernacular; and because one cannot handle it as another can, envy springs up. So the envious man goes subtly to work and doth not find with him who poetises the fault of not knowing how to write, but finds fault with that which is the material [120] of his work, so that by slighting the work on that side he may deprive the poet of honour and of fame; as one should find fault with the steel of a sword for the sake of discrediting not the steel, but the whole work of the master.

The fifth and last sect is impelled by abjectness of mind. The large-souled man ever exalts himself in his heart, and so counterwise the small-souled man ever holds himself [130] less

Pusillaninity than he really is. And because magnifying and minifying always have regard to something in comparison to which the large-souled man makes himself great and the small-souled man makes himself little, it comes to pass that the large-souled man always makes others of less account than they are, and the small-souled man of more. And because with the same measure wherewith a man measures himself he measures the things that are his, which are as it were a part of himself, [140] it comes to pass that the large-souled man's things always seem to him better than they are, and the things of others worse; and the small-souled man always thinks his things of little worth, and the things of others of much. Wherefore many, by reason of this abjectness, depreciate their own vernacular and praise that of others.

And all these together make up the detestable wretches of Italy who hold cheap that costly vernacular, if which be vile in ought it is [150] only in so far as it sounds upon the prostitute lips of these adulterers, by whose guidance the blind men go of whom I made mention under the head of the first cause.

40-46. Compare I. 1 : 30-35, where the same fact is regarded from a somewhat different point of view.

58-70. Compare the very different temper in which the same characteristics of sheep are treated in *Purgatorio* III. 79-84.

84. *Poets*. The Italian is *dicatori*. Perhaps it may mean *orators* (as Miss Hillard takes it), or *writers* generally.

97, 98. *The grammar of the Greeks*. Though Dante generally uses the word *grammar* to mean Latin (as in our 'Grammar School,' equivalent to the German

'Lateinische Schule'), yet he regards it as applicable to any language with (as he supposed) conventionally fixed literary forms. See *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, I. 1 : 27-34, where it is asserted that all peoples have a vernacular but only some (the Greeks amongst them) a grammar. Compare I. 5 : 50-52, *note*.

126-144. Aristotle's *μεγαλόψυχος* has always given trouble both to commentators and translators. He is the man of conscious superiority, who is worthy of great things and estimates himself at his true worth (see *note* on IV. 17 : 44); and though, as represented by Aristotle, he is already offensively 'superior,' yet in the present passage Dante adds difficulties to the Aristotelian conception by seeming to make his *magnanimo* overestimate (instead of duly estimating) his own high significance relatively to that of others, which would throw him into one of Aristotle's vicious extremes.

## CHAPTER XII

[The author's burning love of his native tongue, manifested in the ways set forth above, itself springs from two causes ( $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ ) that beget, and form three ( $\gamma$ ,  $\delta$ ,  $\epsilon$ ) that foster love. ( $\alpha$ ) The home feeling we have to the language we first spoke as children breeds a love for it that can never be superseded, and ( $\beta$ ) the proved excellence of Italian as a vehicle of thought makes it the object of love, on its own account, apart from all personal associations.]

If the flame of fire were issuing plain to see **Flames**  
 from the windows of a house, and one should **of love**  
 ask whether there was a fire therein, and another  
 should answer him yea, I could not well judge  
 which of the two were most to be derided.  
 And of no other fashion were his question  
 and my answer should one ask me, after the

Nearness of a man's mother tongue reasons set forth above, whether love of my own tongue is in me [10] and should I answer him yea. But none the less I have yet to show that not only love but most perfect love of it abides in me, and I have yet further to denounce its adversaries. And in demonstrating this to whoso shall rightly understand, I will tell how I became its friend, and then how the friendship was confirmed.

I say then (as Tully may be seen to write in that of *Friendship*, not [20] departing therein from the teaching of the Philosopher, set forth in the eighth and ninth of the *Ethics*) that nearness and excellence are the natural causes which generate love; and benefaction, [community of] study and comradeship are the causes which foster love. And all these causes have been at work begetting and strengthening the love which I bear to my vernacular, as I will briefly show.

[30] A thing is near in proportion as of all the things of its kind it is most closely united to a man; wherefore a son is nearest to his father; and of all arts medicine is nearest to the doctor, and music to the musician, because they are more closely united to them than are the rest; of all lands that is nearest to a man wherein he maintains himself, because it is more closely united to him. And thus a man's proper vernacular [40] is nearest to him, inasmuch as it is most closely united to him; for it is singly and alone in his mind before any other; and not only is it united to him essentially, in itself, but also incidentally, inasmuch as it is conjoined with the persons closest to him, as his relatives, his fellow-citizens, and his own people.

Such, then, is a man's own vernacular, which we will not call near, but most nearest to him. Wherefore, if nearness be the seed of [50] friendship, as was said above, it is clear that it is amongst the causes of the love which I bear to my tongue, which is most near to me above the others. It was the abovesaid cause, namely that that is most closely united which at first has sole possession of the mind, that gave rise to the custom which makes first-born sons succeed alone, as the closer, and because closer, more loved.

Excel-  
lence of  
Italian

[60] Again its excellence makes me its  $\beta$  friend. And here you are to know that every excellence proper to a thing is to be loved in that thing; as in masculinity to be well bearded, and in femininity to be well smooth of beard over all the face. As in a setter, good scent, and in a boarhound, good speed. And the more proper is the excellence the better is it to be loved; wherefore, though every virtue is to be [70] loved in man, that is most to be loved in him which is most human; and that is justice, which abides only in the rational or intellectual part, that is in the will. This is so much to be loved that, as the Philosopher says in the fifth of the *Ethics*, they who are its foes, as are robbers and plunderers, love it; and therefore we see that its contrary, to wit injustice, is most hated; as [80] treachery, ingratitude, forgery, theft, rapine, cheating and their likes. Which be such inhuman sins that, to shield himself from the infamy thereof, long usage alloweth that man may speak of himself, as was said above, and that he have leave to



Its efficiency I shall hereafter speak more at length in the fourteenth treatise, and here leaving it I return to the matter in hand. That has been shown, then, to be the most proper [90] excellence of a thing which is most loved and praised in it; and we must see in each case what that excellence is. Now we see that in all matters of speech rightly to manifest the conception is the most loved and commended. This, then, is its prime excellence. And inasmuch as this excellence abideth in our vernacular, as hath been shown above, in another chapter, it is clear that it is of the causes of the love [100] which I bear to the said vernacular; because, as already said, excellence is a cause that generates love.

18. *May be seen to write.* This is apparently Dante's form of reference when he is not quoting any specific passage from a work but is giving his impression of what an intelligent man may gather from his study of it. Compare II. 3 : 28 f., *note*, and II. 13 : 29.

75, 76. Dante's memory appears to have misled him here as Aristotle does not quite say this.

82. *Inhuman.* Yet inasmuch as they are the abuse of the specifically human sense of justice, they might, from another point of view, be regarded as specifically human. And this is more nearly the view taken in *Inferno* XI., see specially line 25. Compare the note at the end of the 'Temple Classics' *Inferno*.

86 ff. Since justice was to be dealt with in the fourteenth treatise, which was also to give occasion for a special discourse on allegory (see II. 1 : 35, 36), it is clear that the beautiful *Ode* XIII. was to have been its text. Gardner infers from Dante's words, *to shield himself*, etc., that in this fourteenth treatise he would have expressly defended himself against the charge of malversation of public money brought against him in his sentence of exile.



## CHAPTER XIII

[( $\gamma$ ) Moreover, the author has supreme obligations to Italian, for (i.) since language is the specific bond of human society, bringing contemporaries into relation with each other and linking the generations together, the specific language of a country is one of the determining influences to which people of that country owe their very existence ; and so the author owes his existence in part to that Italian language which was the medium in which his parents lived and loved ; and (ii.) it was Italian that introduced him to Latin, and therefore it is to Italian that he is ultimately indebted for his share of that knowledge which is the distinguishing excellence of man. And further ( $\delta$ ) community of interest binds him to Italian, for all his passion has been to give it stability and glory, so that if it be not honoured his life has failed ; and ( $\epsilon$ ) the penetrating intimacy of his intercourse with Italian, which has entered into the very texture of his spiritual being, has confirmed his love of it. Hence he has every reason to love his native tongue ; and herewith his apology is complete. So now let the new light of this Italian tongue shine upon those who sit in darkness which no ray of the Latin tongue has reached !]

HAVING told how these two things exist in my own tongue, whereby I was made its friend—to wit, its nearness to myself and its own excellence—I will tell how, by benefaction and by harmony of purpose, and the good-will of long comradeship, the friendship has been confirmed and fostered. The food of friendship

I say first that I, in myself, have received the greatest of benefactions from it. And therefore [ $\gamma$ ] be it known that amongst all bene-

Being and well-being factions that is greatest which is most precious to him who receives it; and nothing is so precious as that for the sake of which all the others are desired; and all other things are desired for the perfection of him who desires them.

i. ii. Wherefore, since a man hath two perfections—the first and the second (the first gives him being and the second gives him well-being), if my proper tongue hath been [20] the cause both of the one and of the other I have received the very greatest benefaction from it. And that it hath been the cause of my existence—if my being here at all did not establish it—may be briefly shown.

i. May not there be many efficient causes with respect to one thing, though one of them be so in a higher degree than the others? For the fire and the hammer are efficient causes of the knife, though the smith is so in chiefest [30] place. Now this my vernacular it was that brought together them who begat me, for by it they spoke; even as the fire disposes the iron for the smith who is making the knife; wherefore it is manifest that it took part in my begetting and so was a certain cause of my

ii. being. Moreover, this my vernacular led me into the way of knowledge, which is our specific perfection; inasmuch as by it I [40] entered upon Latin, which was explained to me in it; which Latin was then my path to further advance; wherefore, it is plain, and is acknowledged by me, that it hath been my benefactor in the highest degree.

δ. Also it hath been of one same purpose with me, which I can thus prove. Everything

naturally studies its own preservation; wherefore, if the vernacular could in itself pursue any purpose, it would study this preservation; and [50] this would be adapting itself to greater stability; and greater stability it could not have save by binding itself in numbers and in rhymes. And this same study hath been mine, as is so manifest as to need no witness. Wherefore one same study hath been common to it and to me; whence by this harmony our friendship hath been confirmed and fostered.

The  
founda-  
tions of  
goodwill

Further, ours is the goodwill of [60] comradeship; for from the beginning of my life I have abode in goodwill and communion with it, and have used it in pondering, in explaining and in questioning. Wherefore if friendship grows by comradeship, as is plain to the sense, it is manifest that it hath grown in me to the highest, since I have passed all my time in company with this same vernacular. Wherefore it appears that all the causes which can [70] generate and foster friendship have combined for this friendship; whence the conclusion that not only love but most perfect love for it, is that which I ought to have and which I have.

So turning back our eyes, and gathering up the reasons already noted, it may be seen that this bread with which the viands of the odes written below must be eaten is sufficiently purged [80] from its blemishes, and from being made of oats; wherefore it is time to set about serving the viands. This shall be that oaten bread whereby thousands shall be sated and my baskets shall be left full for me. This shall be the new light, the new sun, which

Light in shall rise when the wonted sun shall set, and  
darkness shall give light to them who are in darkness  
and in shadow as to the wonted sun, which  
shines not for them.

16-44. See II. 14 : 26 ff., *note*.

22, 23. *Of my being here, etc.* The text may be corrupt,  
and the interpretation is certainly doubtful.

84. *My baskets, etc.* Compare I. 1 : 75.

# THE SECOND TREATISE

## ODE I

*Voi che intendendo il terzo ciel movete.*

### I

YE who by understanding move the third heaven      hear-  
ken to the discourse which is in my heart      for I may not  
tell it to any other, so strange it seemeth me.

'Tis the heaven which followeth your worth,      gentle  
creatures that ye be,      that draweth me into the state  
wherein I find me.      [6]

Wherefore the discourse of the life which I endure

Meseems were worthily directed unto you ;      therefore  
I pray that ye give me heed anent it.      I will tell the  
wondrous story of my heart

How the sad soul wailleth in it,      and how a spirit dis-  
courseth counter to her      that cometh upon the rays of  
your star.      [13]

### II

Is wont to be the life of my grieving heart      a sweet  
thought that would take its way      many a time to the  
feet of your Sire,

Where it beheld a lady in glory      of whom it discoursed  
to me so sweetly      that my soul said ever : ' Fain would  
I go thither.'      [19]

Now one appears who puts him to flight

And lords it over me with such might      that my heart  
so trembles thereat as to reveal it in outward semblance.      He  
makes me gaze upon a lady,

And saith : ' Who would behold salvation      heedfully let  
him look upon this lady's eyes      if he fear not the anguish  
of sighings.'      [26]

### III

Findeth such an adversary as destroyeth him      the

humble thought that was wont to discourse to me of an  
angel who is crowned in heaven.

The soul wails, so doth she still grieve thereat, and  
saith : ' O wretched me, how fleeth that tender one who  
hath consoled me.' [32]

Of my eyes this afflicted one exclaimeth :

' What hour was that wherein such lady looked upon  
them ! and wherefore did they not believe me concerning  
her ? I ever said : *Verily in her eyes*

*Must he needs stand who slays my peers.* And my  
perceiving it availed me nought against their gazing  
upon such an one that I am slain thereby.' [39]

#### IV

' Thou art not slain, only thou art dismayed O soul of  
ours, who dost so lament thee,' saith a little spirit of  
gentle love ;

' For this fair lady, whom thou perceivest, hath so  
transformed thy life, that thou art terrified, so cowardly  
hast thou become.' [45]

See how tender she is and humble,

Sage and courteous in her greatness, and think hence-  
forth to call her lady : for, if thou deceive not thyself, thou  
shalt see

Adornment of such lofty miracles, that thou shalt  
say : *Love, very lord, behold thy handmaid ; do as  
pleaseth thee.*' [52]

#### *Tornata*

Ode ! I believe that they shall be but rare who shall  
rightly understand thy meaning, so intricate and knotty  
is thy utterance of it :

Wherefore if perchance it come about that thou take  
thy way into the presence of folk, who seem not  
rightly to perceive it ; [58]

Then I pray thee to take heart again,

And say to them, O my beloved lastling : ' Give heed  
at least how beautiful I am.' [61]

## CHAPTER I

[Of the four chief senses according to which a text may be expounded, and why it were (a) impossible (for three reasons) and (b) irrational to make the allegorical or any other interpretation precede the literal. Wherefore the order of exposition will be first the literal, then the allegorical, with such incidental notices of the moral and anagogical as may seem fitting.]

Now that, by way of introductory discourse, my bread has been sufficiently prepared by my ministration in the preceding treatise, time calls and requires that my ship should issue from the port. Wherefore adjusting the sail of reason to the breeze of my longing I enter upon the open sea, with the hope of a fair journey and of a wholesome port and praiseworthy, at the close of this my feast. But [10] that this my food be the more profitable, ere the first viands are served I would show how it must be eaten.

I say that, as was told in the first chapter, this exposition must be both literal and allegorical; and that this may be understood it should be known that writings may be taken and should be expounded chiefly in four senses. [20] The first is called the literal, and it is the one that extends no further than the letter as it stands; the second is called the allegorical, and is the one that hides itself under the mantle of these tales, and is a truth hidden under beauteous fiction. As when Ovid says that Orpheus with his lyre made wild beasts tame and made trees and rocks approach him; which would say that the wise man with the

Of  
the four  
senses of  
a text

i. ii. iii. iv.

ii.

Of the instrument of his voice maketh cruel [30] hearts  
 divers tender and humble; and moveth to his will  
 senses of such as have [not] the life of science and of  
 a text art; for they that have not the rational life are  
 as good as stones. And why this way of hiding  
 was devised by the sages will be shown in the  
 last treatise but one. It is true that the theo-  
 logians take this sense otherwise than the poets  
 do, but since it is my purpose here to follow the  
 method of the poets I shall take [40] the alle-  
 gorical sense after the use of the poets.

iii. The third sense is called moral, and this is  
 the one that lecturers should go intently noting  
 throughout the scriptures for their own behoof  
 and that of their disciples. Thus we may note  
 in the Gospel, when Christ ascended the moun-  
 tain for the transfiguration, that of the twelve  
 apostles he took with him but three; wherein  
 the moral may be understood that [50] in the  
 most secret things we should have but few  
 companions.

iv. The fourth sense is called the anagogical,  
 that is to say 'above the sense'; and this is  
 when a scripture is spiritually expounded which  
 even in the literal sense, by the very things it  
 signifies, signifies again some portion of the  
 supernal things of eternal glory; as may be seen  
 in that song of the prophet which saith that  
 when the people of Israel came out of Egypt,  
 [60] Judea was made holy and free. Which  
 although it be manifestly true according to the  
 letter is none the less true in its spiritual inten-  
 tion; to wit, that when the soul goeth forth out  
 of sin, it is made holy and free in its power.

And in thus expounding, the literal sense



should always come first as the one in the meaning whereof the others are included, and without which it were impossible and [70] irrational to attend to the others, and especially to the allegorical. It is impossible, because in everything that has an inside and an outside it is impossible to come at the inside save we first come at the outside. Wherefore inasmuch as in the scriptures [the literal sense] is ever outside, it is impossible to come at the others without first coming at the literal. Again it is impossible, because [80] in every natural and artificial thing it is impossible to proceed to the form without first duly disposing the subject on which the form must be impressed. Just as it is impossible for the form of gold to accrue if the material, to wit its subject, be not first digested and prepared; or for the form of a chest to come if the material, to wit the wood, be not first disposed and prepared. Wherefore inasmuch as the literal [90] meaning is always the subject and material of the others, especially the allegorical, it is impossible to come at the knowledge of the others before coming at the knowledge of it. Further, it is impossible because in every natural or artificial thing it is impossible to proceed unless the foundation be first made; as in a house, and as in study. Wherefore since demonstration is the building up of knowledge and the [100] literal demonstration is the foundation of the others, especially the allegorical, it is impossible to come at the others before coming at this.

Again, suppose it were possible it would be irrational, that is to say out of order, and would

The  
literal  
sense the  
founda-  
tion

*a, b.*

*a.*

*i.*

*ii.*

*iii.*

*b.*

From therefore be carried on with much irksomeness  
 known to and with much error. Wherefore, as saith the  
 unknown Philosopher in the first of the *Physics*, nature  
 wills that we should proceed in due order in  
 [110] our learning, to wit by proceeding from  
 that which we know better to that which we  
 know not so well. I say that nature wills it,  
 inasmuch as this way of learning is naturally  
 born in us. And therefore if the other senses  
 are less known than the literal (which it is  
 manifestly apparent that they are) it would be  
 irrational to proceed to demonstrate them if the  
 literal had not been demonstrated first. There-  
 fore, [120] for these reasons, I shall always first  
 discourse concerning each ode as to the literal  
 sense of the same; and after that I shall dis-  
 course of its allegory, that is its hidden truth;  
 and from time to time I shall touch upon the  
 other senses incidentally as shall suit place and  
 time.

14-16. See I. 1: 127-132.

19 ff. The four senses here spoken of are much more  
 crisply distinguished in *Epistle X.* (to Can Grande), lines  
 133-161: 'In evidence then of what has been said, be  
 it known that the sense of the work [*The Comedy*] is not  
 simple, but may rather be called polysemous, that is  
 of many senses. For the sense that is gathered by the  
 letter is one, and the sense that is gathered by the things  
 signified by the letter another; and the first is called  
*literal*, but the second *allegorical* or mystical; which  
 method of treatment, for its better explanation, may be  
 considered with reference to this verse:—

'*When Israel came out of Egypt, the house of Jacob out of  
 a barbarous people, Judea became his sanctification, Israel  
 his power.*

'For should we consider the *letter* only, the exit of the  
 children of Israel from Egypt in the time of Moses is  
 what is signified to us; if the *allegory*, our redemption

accomplished through Christ is signified to us; if the *moral* sense, the conversion of the mind from the grief and misery of sin to the state of grace is signified to us; if the *anagogical*, the exit of the holy soul from the slavery of this corruption to the liberty of eternal glory is signified. And although these mystic senses are called by various names they may all in general be called allegorical, since they differ from the literal or historical.'

20-25. The text is that of a Paris MS. reported by Dr. Moore, but it does not seem very satisfactory. The phrase 'these tales' implies that some mention of the 'tales' was made in defining the literal meaning.

35, 36. Compare I. 12 : 86 f. and *note*.

36, 37. The theologians, for one thing, do not regard the literal sense of the scriptures as a 'beauteous fiction.'

44. *Scriptures*. The word is applied to the Latin poets as well as to the Bible. Compare *Epistle X.* to Can Grande, line 424. Both alike were freely 'moralised.'

55, 56. Aquinas says that God has the power of fitting not only words but things themselves to a signification; and thus in interpreting Scripture we must understand that the words may signify things, which things themselves signify other things. So Dante says here that the literal meaning itself, *by the things it signifies*, may signify eternal things.

63-65. This is a moral rather than an anagogical interpretation, and is given as such in the *Epistle* to Can Grande (see *note* above).

79-88. The form, being that which makes the thing what it is, is here regarded as a kind of signet, stamped upon the material, which material is therefore the 'subject,' or *underlying* somewhat, on which it is impressed. For the meaning of 'form' see II. 14 : 140, *note*, p. 123.

124-126. Instances in which the moral significance of texts is insisted upon may be found in II. 16: 50-58, III. 1: 45, IV. 17: 106 ff. We may perhaps regard such passages as the conclusion of IV. 22 as instances of the anagogical interpretation, which always refers in some direct way to things of heaven.

## CHAPTER II

[The author tells how this ode arose out of the conflict in his mind between the memory of the lost Beatrice and a growing love for the gentle lady whose pity sought to console him; and how the victorious power of this last wrung from him a cry to the spirits from whose influence it came. Of the method of exposition by division to be followed throughout this work; and of the division of this ode into (I.) the invocation; (II.) the tale of the internal conflict; and (III.) the tornata or envoie.]

The lady of the window To begin with, then, I say that the star of Venus had twice already revolved in that circle of hers which makes her appear at even or at morn, according to the two divers periods, since the passing away of that blessed Beatrice who liveth in heaven with the angels and on earth with my soul, when that gentle lady, of whom I made mention in the end of the *Vita* [10] *Nuova*, first appeared to my eyes accompanied with love, and took some place in my mind. And, as is told by me in the aforesaid book, more of her gentleness than of my choice it came to pass that I consented to be hers; for she showed herself to be impassioned by so great pity for my widowed life that the spirits of my eyes became in supreme degree her friends. And when thus affected, they so [20] wrought within me that my pleasure was content to put itself at the disposal of this image. But because love cometh not to birth and growth and perfect state in a moment, but needeth some certain time and nourishment of thoughts, especially where there be counter thoughts that impede it, it was neces-

sary ere this new love became perfect that there should be much strife between the thought which nourished it and that [30] which was counter to it, and which still held the citadel of my mind on behalf of that glorified Beatrice. Wherefore the one was constantly reinforced from before, and the other by memory from behind. And the reinforcement from before increased day by day (which the other might not) as hindering me, in a certain sense, from turning my face backwards. Wherefore it seemed to me so strange, and also so hard [40] to endure, that I might not sustain it; and with a kind of cry (to excuse myself for the change wherein, methought, I showed lack of firmness) I directed my voice to that quarter whence came the victory of the new thought (and the same, being a celestial virtue, was most victorious), and I began to say,—

Conflict  
of loves

*Ye who by understanding move the third heaven.*

Rightly to grasp the [50] meaning of the ode it is necessary first to understand its divisions, so that it may thereafter be easy to perceive its meaning. And that there may be no need of setting these same words in front of the expositions of the other odes, I say that this same order which will be observed in this treatise it is my intention to follow in all the others.

I say then that the ode before us is composed of three chief parts. The [60] first is the first I. verse of it, wherein are introduced, that they may hearken to that which I intend to say, certain Intelligences, or, to name them after the more

- Main customary use, certain Angels, which are set  
divisions over the revolution of the heaven of Venus, as
- II. its movers. The second is the three verses which follow after the first, wherein is shown that which was heard in the spirit within as
  - III. between the divers thoughts. The third is the [70] fifth and last verse, wherein a man is wont to address the work itself, as though to hearten it. And all these three parts in order are to be expounded after the fashion above expressed.

On the astronomical questions raised in this and the following chapter, see Appendix, p. 440 ff.; and on the relations between the narrative here and in the *Vita Nuova*, p. 432 ff.

49-57. The divisions, which are generally felt as a mere disturbance by the reader of the *Vita Nuova*, and which seem needlessly elaborate even in the *Convivio*, may be regarded, in part, as a cumbrous method of punctuation. They are copied from the Aristotelian commentaries of Thomas Aquinas, where they are more in place.

### CHAPTER III

- [(I.) (a) Of the spirits invoked, and (b) of the heaven which they move; and first of the latter. (b) Of Aristotle's unripe theories, and the explanation thereof. Of Ptolemy's conclusive discoveries and the nine revolving heavens.]

The literal sense THE more clearly to discern the literal sense (which is our present concern) of the first part, according to the above division, we must know

- I. who and how many are they who are summoned

a, b. to hear me; and what is this third heaven which I declare that they move. And first I will

b. speak of the heaven, and then I will speak of

those to whom I address myself. And albeit these things, in proportion to the reality, may be but little [10] known, yet what little human reason sees of them hath more delight than the much and the certain concerning things whereof we judge [more fully], according to the opinion of the Philosopher in that *Of the Animals*.

Number  
of the  
heavens

I say then that concerning the number of the heavens and their position divers opinions have been held by many, although the truth hath at last been found. Aristotle, following [20] only the ancient grossness of the astrologers, believed that there were no more than eight heavens, the extremest of which, containing all the sum of things, was that whereon the stars are fixed, to wit the eighth sphere; and that outside of that there was no other. Moreover, he believed that the heaven of the sun came next after that of the moon, that is that it was the second from us. And this so erroneous opinion of his, whoso wills may see in the second *Of Heaven and the* [30] *World*, which is in the second of the *Books of Nature*. But truly he shows his excuse for this in the twelfth of the *Metaphysics*, where he lets us clearly see that he was just following the opinion of others where he had to speak of Astrology.

Thereafter Ptolemy, perceiving that the eighth sphere had more than one movement, since he saw that its circle departed from the direct circle which turns the whole from east to [40] west, constrained by the principles of philosophy (which of necessity will have a *primum mobile* of perfect simplicity) laid down the existence of another heaven, outside that of the stars, which



Order of the heavens should make that revolution from the east to the west. And I say that it is completed in about four-and-twenty hours, that is in twenty hours and three hours and fourteen out of fifteen parts of another, roughly reckoning. So that according to him and according to the tenets of [50] astrology and philosophy (after the observation of these motions) the moving heavens are nine; and their relative position is manifested and determined according as, by the arts of perspective arithmetic and geometry, it is perceived by sense and reason; and by further observation of the senses, as in the eclipse of the sun, it appears sensibly that the moon is beneath the sun; and by the testimony of Aristotle, [60] who saw with his own eyes (as he tells us in the second *Of Heaven and the World*) the moon, being at the half, pass below Mars with her darkened side, and Mars remain hidden till he reappeared from the other shining side of the moon which was facing the west.

28, 29. *Whoso wills may see.* See note on I. 12: 18, 19. Aristotle lays down the principle (*De Caelo*, II. 10) that the 'proper motion' of each sphere (see Appendix, p. 438 ff.) is slower in order of its remoteness from the *primum mobile*, and (as Averroes points out in the commentary) this would involve the 'so erroneous opinion' mentioned in the text that the sun comes next after the moon, counting outwards from the earth.

31-35. The passage referred to is in *Metaphysics*, XII. 8. Aristotle says that in such inquiries we must investigate some things ourselves and accept others from those who have looked into them, and where two authorities differ we must 'be grateful to both, and follow the more trustworthy.'

36. *Ptolemy*, etc. See Appendix, p. 442.

46-48. This corresponds, of course, to the sidereal (not the solar) day.



## CHAPTER IV

[Of the order and succession of the nine revolving heavens. Of the empyrean, unknown to Gentile science but affirmed by the Church, embracing all space, existing not in space but in the mind of God, the abode of the blessed spirits, itself still but the source and goal of all motion by the longing it begets in the outmost revolving heaven. Of Aristotle's premonition and of the Psalmist's proclamation of the same. That the heaven of Venus is third amongst the ten. Of the relatively fixed poles of the inner revolving spheres, and the absolutely fixed poles of the outmost one. Of their equators and the virtue of the same. Of the epicycle of Venus and of the planet situate on the most virtuous region of the same. Of the sense in which there are ten heavens and the sense in which there are more.]

AND the order of their position is this: The first in the enumeration is that wherein is the moon; the second is that wherein is Mercury; the third is that wherein is Venus; the fourth is that wherein is the sun; the fifth is that wherein is Mars; the sixth is that wherein is Jupiter; the seventh is that wherein is Saturn; the eighth is that of the fixed stars; the ninth is that which is not perceived by the senses [10] save by that movement which was spoken of above; and it is called by many the crystalline heaven, that is the diaphanous, or all transparent. But beyond all these the Catholics assert the empyrean heaven, which is as much as to say the heaven of flame, or the luminous heaven; and they assert it to be immovable, because it hath in itself with respect to every part that which its matter demandeth. And

Enumera-  
tion of  
the  
heavens

The *empyrean* this is the cause of the [20] *primum mobile* having the swiftest motion, because by reason of the most fervid appetite wherewith every part of this ninth heaven, which is next below it, longeth to be conjoined with every part of this divinest, and tranquil heaven, it revolves therein with so great yearning that its swiftness is scarce to be comprehended. But still and tranquil is the place of that supreme deity which alone completely perceiveth [30] itself. This is the place of the blessed spirits, according as holy Church, which may not lie, will have it; and Aristotle likewise seemeth to agree hereto (to whoso rightly understandeth) in the first *Of Heaven and the World*. This is the sovrane edifice of the world, wherein all the world is included, and outside of which there is nought; and it is not itself in space, but was formed only in the primal mind, which the Greeks call *protonoë*. [40] This is that 'magnificence' whereof the Psalmist spoke when he saith to God: 'Thy magnificence is exalted above the heavens.' And thus, gathering up what hath been discoursed, it appears that there are ten heavens, of which that of Venus is the third; whereof mention is made in that passage which I am intent on expounding.

And be it known that every heaven beneath the crystalline has two poles fixed [50] with respect to itself; and the ninth has them firm and fixed, and immutable in every respect; and each one, the ninth as well as the rest, has a circle which may be called the equator of its proper heaven; which is equally distant in every part of its revolution from either pole, as he may

see by the senses who revolves an apple or other circular thing. And this circle in each heaven hath [60] greater swiftness of motion than any other part in that heaven, as may be seen by whoso rightly considereth. And each part in proportion as it is nearer thereto moveth more rapidly, and in proportion as it is remote therefrom and nearer to the pole more slowly; because its revolution is smaller and must of necessity take place in the same time as the greater. I say, further, that in proportion as the heaven is nearer to the [70] equatorial circle, it is more noble in comparison to its poles; because it hath more movement, and more actuality, and more life, and more form, and it touches more of the one which is above it, and by consequence hath more virtue. And so the stars of the starry heaven are fuller of virtue, as between themselves, the nearer they are to this circle.

Poles,  
equators  
and  
epicycles

And upon the hump of this circle in the heaven of Venus, of which we are at present treating, [80] is a spherule, which revolves on its own account in that heaven; the circle of which the astrologers call an 'epicycle.' And even as the great sphere revolves [on] two poles so does this little one; and so has this little one its equatorial circle; and so is it more noble in proportion as it is nearer thereto; and upon the arc or hump of this circle is fixed the most shining star of Venus. And although it be said that there are ten heavens, yet [90] according to very truth this number doth not embrace them all; for this of which mention hath been made, to wit the epicycle whereon the star is

The third heaven fixed, is a heaven or sphere of itself; and it hath not one same essence with that which beareth it, though it be more connatural to it than to the others, and is spoken of as one heaven with it, and the one and the other is called the heaven of the star. How the other heavens and the other stars be we are not at [100] present to treat; let that suffice which hath been said of the truth of the third heaven, with which I am at present concerned and as to which all that is needful to us for the present purpose has been completely expounded.

33, 34. It is Aristotle's consistent teaching that physical motion cannot be ultimately explained on physical principles, but implies and depends upon some immaterial existence; for the only physical explanation of movement consists in showing how one body is moved by another, but this other body must itself be in motion, and therefore the problem remains exactly where it was. Therefore there must ultimately be something which moves a physical body without itself being in motion; and this cannot be a material thing, and must therefore be of the nature of mind. It is in fact the deity, the immaterial principle on which heaven and all nature depend. The outmost heaven loves and longs for this immaterial or divine essence, and moves in obedience to that love and longing; for motion, when not caused by a physical impulse, is the expression of unsatisfied longing. This heaven, then, is the *primum mobile*, or 'first thing capable of motion,' and it conveys motion to all else. The divine and immaterial principle, then, is, by the love and longing it inspires, the ultimate source of all motion. Compare *Paradiso*, I. 1-3: 76-78, etc. In the passage to which Dante here refers (*De Caelo*, I. 9) Aristotle has just attempted to prove that space itself must be limited, because 'body' cannot possibly be infinite, and therefore space, which is 'possibility of body,' cannot be infinite either; nor can there be time there, since time is the succession of material movements. He then proceeds, 'It is clear then that neither is there space nor vacuum

nor time outside of it; wherefore the nature of the things that are there is not spacial, nor doth time make them grow old; nor is there any change of any of those things which are ranged above the outmost rotation, but they are unchangeable and passionless, enjoying the superlative existence, and passing in absolute self-sufficiency their eternal life.' More of like import follows. Dante might well consider such passages as this to be premonitions of the doctrine of the Church, for in fact the doctrine of the Church was no more than the elaboration of them.

36-39. Compare *Paradiso*, XXVII. 109-114.

42. Psalm viii. 2: '*Quoniam elevata est magnificentia tua super caelos.*'

72, 73. The *potentiality* of a thing is *actualised* and the thing itself *informed* in proportion as it becomes or does what it is capable of being or doing. Compare also *Paradiso*, V. 87, *note*.

## CHAPTER V

[(a) Of the intelligences (or angels) which move this heaven. How Aristotle seems to number the like beings after the number of the heavenly movements, and how Plato numbers them after the number of the kinds of things. How the Gentiles worshipped them as deities. How all these errors sprang from lack (a) of reasoning and (β) of instruction. (a) How reason will have it (i.) that there be more of such beings contemplating than active, and (ii.) that in creating the same God should transcend such number as man hath power to conceive. Why it is no scandal that these reasons and others be not demonstrative.]

Now that it has been demonstrated in the preceding chapter what this third heaven is, and how it is disposed in itself, it remains to expound <sup>a.</sup> who they be who move it. Be it known, there-

Of angels fore, firstly, that the movers thereof are substances sejunct from matter, to wit, Intelligences, which are vulgarly called Angels. And of these creatures, as of the heavens, divers [10] have held divers opinions albeit the truth has been now found. There were certain philosophers, of whom Aristotle appears to be in his *Metaphysics* (although in the first *Of Heaven and the World* he incidentally appears to think otherwise), who believed that there were only so many of them as there were circulatings in the heavens, and no more; saying that the rest would have been eternally in vain, without operation; which, they held, was [20] impossible, inasmuch as their being consists in their operation. Others were there such as Plato, a man of supreme excellence, who laid down not only as many Intelligences as there are movements of heaven, but just as many as there are kinds of things; as all men one kind, and all gold another kind, and all riches another, and so throughout the whole; and they would have it that as the Intelligences of the heavens are the generators of [30] the same, each of his own, so those others were the generators of the other things, and the exemplars each one of his own kind; and Plato calls them Ideas, which is as much as to say Forms, and Universals. The Gentiles called them gods and goddesses, though they did not conceive them so philosophically as did Plato; and they adored images of them, and made most magnificent temples for them; for Juno, for example, whom [40] they called the goddess of power; for Vulcan, whom they called god of fire; for Pallas or Minerva, whom they called goddess

of wisdom; and for Ceres, whom they called goddess of corn. The which opinion is manifested by the testimony of the poets, who from time to time outline the fashion of the Gentiles both in their sacrifices and in their faith; and it is also manifested in many ancient names, which survive either as names [50] or as surnames of places and of ancient buildings, as whoso will may easily discover.

Of  
contem-  
plating  
angels

And although the above-mentioned opinions were furnished by human reason and by no small observation, the truth was not yet perceived, and this both by defect of reason and by defect of instruction; for even reason may perceive that the abovesaid creatures are in far greater number than are the effects which men [60] are able to note. And one reason is this; no one—neither philosopher, nor Gentile, nor Jew, nor Christian, nor any sect—doubts that either all of them, or the greater part, are full of all blessedness, or doubts that these blessed ones are in the most perfect state. And as, inasmuch as human nature, as it here exists, hath not only one blessedness but two, to wit that of the civil life and that [70] of the contemplative life, it were irrational did we perceive those others to have the blessedness of the active that is the civil life, in guiding the world, and not that of the contemplative life, which is more excellent and more divine. And inasmuch as the one that hath the blessedness of guiding may not have the other, because their intellect is one and continuous, there must needs be others exempt from this ministry whose [80] life consists only in speculation. And because this life is the

a, β.

a.

i.



Of the more divine, and because in proportion as a  
 number of thing is more divine it is more like to God, it  
 angels is manifest that this life is more loved by God ;  
 and if it be more loved, its share of blessedness  
 hath been more ample ; and if it be more ample,  
 he hath assigned more living beings to it than  
 to the other. Wherefore we conclude that  
 the number of these creatures is very far in  
 excess of what the effects reveal. And this  
 is not counter [90] to what Aristotle seems  
 to say in the tenth of the *Ethics*, to wit that  
 the speculative life alone fits with the sejunct  
 substances, for if we allow that the speculative  
 life alone fits with them, yet upon the speculation  
 of certain of these followeth the circulation of the  
 heavens, which is the guiding of the world ;  
 which world is a kind of ordered civility per-  
 ceived in the speculation of its movers. The  
 ii. second reason is that no effect is greater than  
 its cause ; for [100] the cause cannot give  
 what itself hath not. Wherefore, since the  
 divine intellect is the cause of everything, especi-  
 ally of the human intellect, [it follows] that the  
 human intellect transcendeth not the divine, but  
 is out of all proportion transcended by it ; so that  
 if we, for the reason above given and for many  
 others, understand that God could have made  
 almost innumerable spiritual creatures, it is mani-  
 fest that he hath indeed made this greater [110]  
 number. Many other reasons may be perceived,  
 but let these suffice for the present.

Nor let any marvel if these and other reasons  
 which we may have for this belief are not  
 brought to complete demonstration ; because for  
 that very reason we should wonder at the



excellence of these beings (which transcends the eyes of the human mind, as saith the Philosopher in the second of the *Metaphysics*), and should affirm their existence. For albeit we have no [120] perception of them by sense, wherefrom our knowledge hath its rise, yet is there in our intellect a kind of reflected glow of the light of their most vivid existence, in so far as we perceive the above said reasons and many others; just as a man whose eyes are closed may affirm that the air is luminous, because of some certain glow, or as a ray that passes through the pupils of the bat; for even so are the eyes of our intellect closed, so long as [130] the mind is bound and imprisoned by the organs of our body.

Seeing in  
blindness

6, 7. Angels are beings (*substances*, compare I. 5 : 3, *note*) essentially and eternally immaterial and separate or distinct (*sejunct*) from matter. Compare *Purgatorio*, XVIII. 49, 50, *note*.

12-20. In the *Metaphysics* (XI. viii.), Aristotle elaborates the correspondence between the movements of the heavens and their immaterial movers. In the *De Caelo* (I. iii.) he appeals to the general conception of deities, entertained alike by Barbarians and Greeks, as consorting with his conception of an eternal and unalterable heaven, which is regarded as their seat. Perhaps this is the passage which Dante took as implying that Aristotle shared the general conception of an indefinite number of divine beings, but the inference seems hardly justified.

21-34. The parallel between Plato's 'ideas,' the Aristotelian 'forms' and the scholastic 'universals,' is perfectly legitimate. The great controversy between the Realists and the Nominalists turned on the question of whether such general conceptions as 'fish' or 'man' corresponded to any real things, or whether these 'universals' were only names, not things.

The mediæval scholars were very imperfectly acquainted with Plato, the *Timæus* being the only one of his Dialogues

to which they had access, in a Latin translation. Aquinas expressly declares that he called 'universal forms' gods.

34-51. Compare II. 6: 117-126; *Paradiso*, IV. 61-63; VIII. 1-9. This group of passages throws much light on Dante's attitude towards the Pagan religions. If the Pagan mythology was a misreading of the angelic influences we can understand how Dante could regard opposition to the heathen deities and worship of them as alike impious. Compare *Inferno*, I. 72, and innumerable passages of the type of *Inferno*, XIV. 46-72, or *Purgatorio*, I. 7-12, and the examples of punished pride in *Purgatorio*, XII.

50. Dante doubtless has in view such names as *Camarte* = 'House of Mars.'

64. The reservation refers to the fallen angels.

76, 77. The passage appears to mean that since the life of angels has no succession, but is one continuous actualising of their whole powers, it must follow that it has no complexity; and consequently if an angel, by its active intellect, moves a heaven, though this may itself be a kind of speculation (see line 94), yet the direct contemplation of God would be thereby excluded. If this is the true interpretation of the passage, it is clear that Dante's conception of the angelic psychology had received indefinite expansion when he wrote the *Paradiso*, for there both the redeemed and the angels are thought of as contemplating all things in God—that is to say as perfect parts of the perfect whole. Though the angelic intellect is continuous its simplicity is reached not by excluding all objects of contemplation except one, but by fusing all objects of contemplation into one. Compare *Paradiso*, XXVIII. and XXIX.

83, 84. Compare *Paradiso* VII. 73-75.

## CHAPTER VI

[(β) How instruction concerning these spiritual creatures, which they lacked of old, hath come to us through Christ and his secretary the Church. Of the three hierarchies and nine orders of angels, and what they severally contemplate. Of them that fell. Of the movers of the heavens severally, and how they that move the heaven of Venus be of the Thrones, whose nature and influence is of love; wherefore the ancients held Love to be the son of Venus. Of the number of these same movers of the third heaven, and of a doubtful question thereanent. Of the nature of their moving.]

IT hath been said that by defect of instruction the ancients perceived not the truth concerning the spiritual creatures, albeit the people of Israel were in part instructed by their prophets, through whom, after many manners of speech and by many modes, God spoke to them, even as saith the Apostle. But as for us, we have been taught about this by him who came from him, by him who [10] made them, by him who preserves them, to wit the emperor of the universe, who is Christ, son of the sovran God, and son of the Virgin Mary (very woman, and daughter of Joachim and Anna), very man, who was slain by us; whereby he brought us life. And he was the light which lightens us in the darkness, as says John the evangelist; and he told us the truth of these things, which we might not know [20] without him, nor see them as they are in truth. The first thing, and the first secret which he showed us thereanent, was one of the aforesaid creatures themselves;

Truth  
about  
angels

β.

Angelic hier-  
archies which was that great ambassador of his who came to Mary, a young damsel of thirteen years, on the part of the holy king celestial.

This our Saviour said with his own mouth that the Father could give him many legions of angels. When it was said to him that the Father had [30] given commandment to his angels to minister unto him and serve him, he denied it not. Wherefore it is manifest to us that these creatures exist in most extended number; because his spouse and secretary, holy Church (of whom Solomon saith, 'Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, full of those things that give delight, leaning upon her friend?') affirms, believes and preaches that these most noble creatures are, as it were, innumerable; and she divides them into three hierarchies [40], which is to say three holy or divine principalities. And each hierarchy has three orders, so that the Church holds and affirms nine orders of spiritual creatures. The first is that of the Angels, the second of the Arch-angels, the third of the Thrones: and these three orders make the first hierarchy; not first in order of nobility, nor in order of creation (for the others are more noble, and all were created at once), but first [50] in the order of our ascent to their loftiness. Next come the Dominations, afterwards the Virtues, then the Principalities; and these make the second hierarchy. Above these are the Powers, and the Cherubim, and above all are the Seraphim; and these make the third hierarchy. And the number of the hierarchies and that of the orders constitutes a most potent system of their speculation. For

inasmuch as the divine majesty is in three <sup>Their</sup> [60] persons, which have one substance, they <sup>contem-</sup> may be contemplated in three-fold manner. <sup>plation</sup>

For the supreme power of the Father may be contemplated; and this it is that the first hierarchy, to wit first in nobility and last in our enumeration, gazes upon; and the supreme wisdom of the Son may be contemplated; and this it is that the second hierarchy gazes upon; and the supreme and most burning love of the Holy [70] Spirit may be contemplated; and this it is that the third hierarchy gazes upon: the which being nearest unto us gives us of the gifts which it receiveth. And inasmuch as each person of the divine Trinity may be considered in three-fold manner, there are in each hierarchy three orders diversely contemplating.

The Father may be considered without respect to aught save himself; and this contemplation the Seraphim do use, who see more of the [80] first cause than any other angelic nature. The Father may be considered according as he hath relation to the Son, to wit how he is parted from him and how united with him, and this do the Cherubim contemplate. The Father may further be considered according as from him proceedeth the Holy Spirit, and how he is parted from him and how united with him; and this contemplation the Powers do use. And in like fashion may there be [90] speculation of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Wherefore it behoves that there be nine manners of contemplating spirits to gaze upon the light which alone seeth itself completely. And here is a word which may not be passed in silence. I

**Their** say that out of all these orders some certain were  
**action** lost so soon as they were created, I take it to the number of a tenth part; for the restoration of which human nature was afterward created.

The revolving heavens, [100] which are nine, declare the numbers, the orders and the hierarchies; and the tenth proclaimeth the very oneness and stability of God. And therefore, saith the Psalmist, 'the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament proclaimeth the works of his hands.' Wherefore it is rational to believe that the movers of the moon be of the order of Angels; and those of Mercury be Arch-angels; and those of Venus be Thrones, the which [110] taking their nature from the love of the Holy Spirit make their work connatural thereto, to wit the movement of that heaven which is full of love. Whence the form of the said heaven conceiveth an ardour of virtue to kindle souls down here to love, according to their disposition. And because the ancients perceived that this heaven was the cause of love down here, they said that Love was the son of Venus; even as [120] Virgil testifieth in the first of the *Æneid*, where Venus saith to Love, 'my son, my power, son of the supreme Father, who heedest not the darts of Typhoeus'; and Ovid in the fifth of the *Metamorphoses*, when he tells how Venus said to Love, 'my son, my arms, my might.' And it is these Thrones that be appointed for the guidance of this heaven, in no great number; but the philosophers and the astrologers have diversely estimated it [130] according as they diversely estimated the circulation of the heavens,

although all be at one in this that they be so many as be the movements which the heaven makes; which movements are (according as we find the best demonstration of the astrologers summarised in the book of the *Collection of the Stars*) three; one according to which the star moves in its epicycle; the second according as the epicycle moves together with its whole heaven, equally with that [140] of the Sun; the third, according as that same whole heaven moves, following the movement of the starry sphere, from west to east one degree in a hundred years. So that for these three movements there are three movers. Further, the whole of this heaven is moved and revolves, together with the epicycle, from east to west once every natural day. Whether which movement be of some Intellect or whether it be of the swaying of the *primum* [150] *mobile* God knoweth; for to me it seemeth presumptuous to judge. It is by understanding solely that these movers produce the circulation in that proper subject which each moveth. The most noble form of heaven, which hath in itself the principle of this passive nature, revolves at the touch of the moving virtue which understandeth it; and I mean by 'touch' not bodily touch, but virtue which directeth itself thereto. And these [160] movers be they to whom my speech is addressed, and to whom I make my demand.

Movements of the third heaven

35-37. Song of Solomon viii. 5. *Quae est ista, quae ascendit de deserto, deliciis affluens, innixa super dilectum suum.*

39-55. The order of the hierarchies here given is the same as is found in Brunetto Latini's *Tresor*, Book I.

Part i. Chapter 12, and it rests on the authority of Isidore of Seville. On Brunetto, see *Inferno*, XV. 23, *note*; and on Isidore, *Par.* X. 131, *note*. The order adopted by Gregory (compare *Paradiso*, XXVIII. 133 ff. and *note*) in the fourth book of the *Dialogues* is different. Dante expressly corrects both his own and Gregory's arrangement in the *Paradiso*.

56-58. The syntax of this passage is a little doubtful, but the sense is not to be mistaken, namely, that there is an intimate connection between the number of the hierarchies and orders and the nature of the object of their contemplation.

121-123. The passage referred to is *Æneid*, I. 664, 665.

‘ Nate, meæ vires, mea magna potentia, solus,  
Nate, patris summi qui tela Typhöia temnis ;’

‘ My son, my power, my strength, my son who alone dost despise the Typhöian darts of the supreme Father.’

Dante's translation is curiously incorrect. Compare *Purgatorio*, XXII. 37-42, *note*.

134. The book referred to is the elementary astronomy of Alfraganus (ninth century); first translated into Latin from the Arabic in 1142. It was Dante's favourite text-book of Astronomy. The passage in question occurs in the fourteenth chapter.

153. *That proper subject*. That is to say the special heaven; the nature of which specially adapted it to *underlie*, or receive, the impress of each angel's intellectual act.



## CHAPTER VII

[In what sort such beings hear, and how the author for two sufficient reasons calls upon them to hearken to the conflict within him. How he would win them to give heed. Why he calls the memory of Beatrice his 'soul' and the thought of the new lady a 'spirit'; and why he declares this spirit to come upon the rays of the planet Venus.]

ACCORDING as was said above in the third chapter of this treatise, rightly to understand the first part of the ode before us it was needful to discourse of those heavens, and of their movers; and discoursed it hath been in the three preceding chapters. I say then to those whom I have shown to be the movers of the heaven of Venus,

Angels  
hearing,  
but not  
by sense

*Ye who by understanding*

(to wit with the intellect alone, as [10] said above)

*move the third heaven,                    hearken to the dis-*  
*course,*

and I say not 'hearken' as though they hear any sound; for they have not sense; but I say 'hearken' to wit with that hearing which they have, which is understanding by the intellect. I say:

*hearken to the discourse which is in my heart,*

to wit inside of me, for it hath not yet appeared without. Be it known that in all this ode, according to the one sense and the other, the

Why and how addressed 'heart' is [20] to be taken as the secret recess within and not as any other special part of the soul or of the body.

When I have called them to hearken to that which I would say, I assign two reasons why I should fitly speak to them; the one is the strangeness of my state, which since it hath not been experienced by other men might not be so well understood by them as by those beings who understand their own [30] effects in their operation. And this reason I hint at when I say,

*For I may not tell it to any other, so strange it seemeth me.*

The other reason is, that when a man receiveth a benefit or a hurt he should rehearse it to him who doth it to him, if he may, ere he rehearse it to another; so that if it be a benefit he who receiveth it may show himself grateful towards the benefactor; and if it be a hurt he may lead the doer by his gentle [40] words to salutary compassion. And this reason I hint at when I say,

*'Tis the heaven which followeth your worth, gentle creatures that ye be, that draweth me into the state wherein I find me,*

that is to say 'your operation,' to wit 'your circulation,' is it that has drawn me into my present state. Wherefore I conclude and say, that my speech ought to be to them, as was declared above; and this I say here,

*Wherefore the discourse of the life which I endure meseems, [50] were worthily directed unto you.*

And after assigning these reasons I pray them  
 .o give heed, when I say,

The soul  
 and the  
 spirit

*Therefore I pray that ye give me heed anent it.*

But inasmuch as in every manner of discourse the speaker should be chiefly intent on persuasion, —to wit on the propitiating those who hear him, which is the beginning of all other persuasions, as the rhetoricians know,—and since the most potent persuasion to [60] render the hearer attentive is the promise to tell novel and imposing things,—I add this persuasion, or propitiation, to the prayers which I have made for a hearing ; announcing to them my intention, which is to relate strange things to them, to wit the strife which there is in my mind ; and great things, to wit, the worth of their star. And this I say in these last words of this first part,

*I will tell the wondrous story of my  
 heart, how the sad [70] soul waileth in  
 it; and how a spirit discourseth counter  
 to her, that cometh upon the rays of your  
 star.*

And for the full understanding of these words I say that this [spirit] is nought else than a frequent thinking upon and commending and propitiating of this new lady ; and this ‘soul’ is nought else than another thought, accompanied by assent, which, repelling the former, commends and propitiates the [80] memory of Beatrice in glory. But inasmuch as the final verdict of the mind, that is its assent, was still retained by that thought which supported the memory, I call it the ‘soul’ and the other a ‘spirit’ ; just

The rays of Venus as when we speak of 'the city' we are wont to mean those who are in possession of it, not those who are attacking it, albeit the one and the other be citizens.

I say then that this spirit comes upon the 'rays of the star,' because you are to know [90] that the rays of each heaven are the path whereby their virtue descends upon things that are here below. And inasmuch as rays are no other than the shining which cometh from the source of the light through the air even to the thing enlightened, and the light is only in that part where the star is, because the rest of the heaven is diaphanous (that is transparent), I say not that this 'spirit,' to wit this thought, cometh from their heaven in its totality [100] but from their star. Which star, by reason of nobility in them who move it, is of so great virtue that it has extreme power upon our souls and upon other affairs of ours, notwithstanding that it be distant, when nighest to us, one hundred and sixty seven times as far as it is to the middle of the earth, which is a space of 3250 miles. And this is the literal exposition of the first part of the ode.

19-22. Compare this emphatic declaration with *Vita Nuova*, § 39 : 35-51 ; where in line 45 read *intendo* not *non intendo*. See further, Appendix, pp. 432-434.

88-100. See III. 14 : 42-48, and *note*.

95 f. *And the light*, etc. Compare IV. 19 : 30-32.

## CHAPTER VIII

[(II.) The second part of the ode tells (*a*) of the two adversaries ( $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ ) and (*b*) of the contention of ( $\alpha$ ) the losing, and of ( $\beta$ ) the victorious combatant. (*a*) Why the author calls ( $\alpha$ ) a certain thought of Beatrice the life of his heart, and how one of the contending powers in him draws its strength therefrom, and whereto he is urged by the same; and ( $\beta$ ) of the source and might of the other contending power, and whereto it urgeth him.]

A SUFFICIENT understanding may be had, by the The above words, of the literal meaning of the first conflict part; wherefore attention is to be turned to the II. second, wherein is declared what I experienced within in the matter of this conflict. And this part hath two divisions; for in the first, to wit *a*. in the first verse, I tell the quality of these conflicting thoughts according to their root, which was [10] within me; then I tell that which *b*. was urged by the one and the other conflicting thought, and so first that which the losing side urged; and this is in the verse which is the second of this part and the third of the ode.

To make evident, then, the meaning of the first *a*. division, be it known that things should be named from the distinguishing nobility of their form; as man from reason, and not from sense nor from [20] aught else that is less noble. Hence when we say that a man is living, it should be understood that the man hath the use of his reason, which is his special life, and is the actualising of his most noble part. And therefore he who severs himself from reason, and hath only use of his sensitive part, doth not live

Life as a man, but liveth as a beast; as saith that of the most excellent Boethius, 'He liveth as an ass,' heart —rightly, as I maintain, because thought is the proper act of the reason, since beasts think [30] not, because they have not reason. And I affirm this not only of the lesser beasts, but of those who have the semblance of man and the spirit of sheep or some other detestable beast. I say a. then, that 'the life of my heart' (that is my inner life) 'was wont to be a sweet thought' ('sweet' is the same as 'suasive,' that is 'ingratiated,' 'dulcet,' 'pleasing,' 'delightsome'), namely, that thought which often went to the 'Sire' of them to whom I speak, [40] which is God; that is to say that I, in thought, contemplated the kingdom of the blessed. And straightway I declare the final cause why I rose up there in my thought, when I say:

*Where it beheld a lady in glory ;*

to give to understand that I was certain (as I am, by her gracious revelation) that she was in heaven. Wherefore, many a time, pondering on her as deeply as I might, I went thither as though rapt.

Then following on I tell the effect of [50] this thought, to give to understand its sweetness, which was so great that it made me long for death, to go thither where it went; and this I say here :

*Of whom it discoursed to me so sweetly that my soul said ever : 'Fain would I go thither.'*

And this is the root of one of the conflicting

sides in me. And you are to know that I call it a 'thought,' and not the 'soul' which rose to look upon this one in bliss, because it was the special [60] thought addressed to this act. 'Soul,' as was said in the preceding chapter, means 'thought in general, with assent.'

Then when I say :

*Now one appears who putteth him to flight,*

I tell of the root of the other conflicting side,  $\beta$ . saying that even as this thought, spoken of above, was wont to be my life, so another appeareth which maketh it cease. I say putteth him 'to flight' to show [70] that this is an adversary, for naturally one adversary flees the other; and the one that flees shows that it is by defect of valour that it flees. And I say that this thought, which newly appears, has power to lay hold of me, and to conquer the whole soul, saying that it so lords it that 'the heart,' that is my inward self, 'trembles,' and it is revealed 'without' by a certain changed semblance.

[80] Following on I show the power of this new thought by its effect, saying that it maketh me gaze upon 'a lady' and saith flattering words to me, that is discourseth before the eyes of my intellectual affection the better to draw me over, promising me that the sight of her eyes is its weal. And the better to gain this credence with the experienced soul, it says that the eyes of this lady are not to be looked upon by [90] any who fears 'anguish of sighs.' And this is a fine figure of rhetoric, when there is the outward appearance of depreciating a thing, and the inward reality of embellishing it. This new

The new  
thought

Its subtle thought of love could not better draw my mind pleading to consent than by so deeply discoursing of the virtue of that lady's eyes.

25 ff. Compare IV. 7 : 102 ff.

42. *Final cause.* That is to say the object for which a thing is done. Thus health is the 'final' cause of my taking exercise, but exercise is the 'efficient' cause of my keeping my health.

## CHAPTER IX

[(*b*) Why the victorious combatant is to speak last. Why the spirits of Venus take this part rather than that. A digression on immortality and on Beatrice in bliss.]

**The** Now that it has been shown how and why love  
**soul's** was born, and the conflict which distracted me,  
**plea** it is meet that we proceed to unveil the meaning  
of that part wherein divers thoughts fight within  
*b.* me. I say that it is meet first to speak on the  
side of the soul, that is to say the ancient  
thought, and then of the other; for this reason,  
that that upon which the speaker doth purpose  
to lay chiefest [10] stress should ever be  
reserved for the last; because that which is last  
said doth most abide in the mind of the hearer.  
Wherefore since it is my purpose to speak and  
to discourse more fully of that which the work  
of those beings whom I address, makes, than of  
that which it unmakes, it was reasonable first to  
speak and discourse of the condition of that side  
which was being destroyed, and then of that  
side which was being produced.



[20] But here arises a difficulty which is not to be passed over without explanation. Since love is the effect of these Intelligences whom I am addressing, and the former thought was love as much as the latter, someone may ask why their power destroys the one and produces the other; whereas it should rather preserve [than destroy] the former, for the reason that every cause loves [30] its effect, and loving it preserves it. To this question the answer may easily be given; to wit, that their effect is indeed love, as hath been said, and inasmuch as they cannot preserve it save in those objects which are subject to their circulation, they change it from that region which is outside their power to that which is within it; that is to say, from the soul which has departed from this life to the soul which is yet in it; just as human [40] nature transfers its preservation in the human form from father to son, because it may not perpetually preserve its effect in the father himself. I say 'its effect,' inasmuch as the soul united with the body is in truth its effect; for the soul which is parted endureth perpetually in a nature more than human. And so is the problem solved.

But inasmuch as the immortality of the [50] soul has here been touched upon, I will make a digression, discoursing thereof, for in such discourse will be a fair ending of my speech concerning that living Beatrice, in bliss, of whom I propose to speak no further in this book. And by way of preface I say that of all stupidities that is the most foolish, the basest, and the most pernicious, which believes that after this life

Of  
Beatrice  
no more  
in this  
book

Universal testimony to immortality there is no other; for if we turn over all the [60] scriptures both of the philosophers and of the other sage writers, all agree in this that within us there is a certain part that endures. And this we see is the earnest contention of Aristotle, in that *Of the Soul*, this the earnest contention of all the Stoics, this the contention of Tully, especially in that booklet *Of Old Age*; this we see is the contention of every poet who has spoken according to the faith of the Gentiles; this [70] the contention of every religion, Jews, Saracens, and Tartars, and all others who live according to any law. So that if all of them were deceived there would follow an impossibility which it would be horrible even to handle. Everyone is assured that human nature is the most perfect of all other natures here below; and this is denied of none; and Aristotle averreth it when he saith in the twelfth *Of the Animals* that man is [80] the most perfect of all the animals. Whence, inasmuch as many living creatures are entirely mortal, as are the brute beasts; and are all, so long as they live, without this hope, to wit of another life; if our hope were vain the flaw in us would be greater than in any other animal; because there have been many ere now who have surrendered this life for the sake of that; and so it would follow that the most [90] perfect animal, to wit man, was the most imperfect, which is impossible; and that part, to wit the reason, which is his chief perfection, would be the cause to him of having this greater flaw; which seemeth a strange thing indeed to aver. Further it would follow that nature had set this hope in the

human mind in opposition to herself, since we have said that many have hastened to the death of the body, for to live in the other [100] life; and this is also impossible. The testimony of Christ

Further we witness unbroken experience of our immortality in the divinations of our dreams, which might not be if there were not some immortal part in us; inasmuch as the revealer, whether corporeal or incorporeal, must needs be immortal if we think it out subtly (and I say 'whether corporeal or incorporeal' because of the diversity of opinion which I find [110] in this matter) and that which is set in motion, or informed, by an immediate informer must stand in some ratio to the informer; and between the mortal and the immortal there is no ratio.

And further we are assured of it by the most truthful teaching of Christ, which is the way, the truth and the light; the way, because in it we advance unimpeded to the blessedness of this very immortality; the truth, because it suffereth no error; the light, because it lighteth us [120] in the darkness of earthly ignorance. This teaching, I say, assureth us above all other reasons; because he hath given it to us who seeth and measureth our immortality, the which we ourselves may not perfectly see, so long as our immortal part is mingled with our mortal part; but by faith we see it perfectly, and by reason we see it with a shadow of obscurity, which cometh about because of the mingling of the mortal [130] with the immortal. And this should be the most potent argument that both the two exist in us; and so I believe, so aver, and so am assured, of the passage after this life to another

Beatrice in heaven better life, where this lady liveth in glory, of whom my soul was enamoured when I strove in such fashion as shall be told in the following chapter.

30. *Preserves it.* Moore's text is *salva quel altro*, but the '*altro*' seems to destroy the sense.

44. *Its effect.* The angelic or heavenly influences have not control over the soul as such; but they can exercise an influence on the human being, body and soul, during the earthly life. Compare *Purgatorio*, XVI. 73-81. The whole sum of natural influences upon man is included, and as it were personified, in '*human nature.*' Compare I. 7: 53-57.

52-55. Compare, however, II. 13: 5, 6, etc.

56. *Stupidities*, or, as Miss Hillard has it, *idiocies*. The Italian is *bestialitadi*. There is no specific connection between the particular opinion which Dante is here denouncing and the term *bestialità*. Thus in IV. 14: 101-110, he declares of a silly argument as to nobility, which he puts into the mouth of his adversary, that the natural answer to such a *bestialità* would be given with a dagger. Hence the inference that when Dante speaks of *bestialità* in *Inferno*, XI. 83, he is referring specially to the heretics who denied the immortality of the soul is quite unwarranted. Since reason is the special characteristic of man, a man without reason is beast-like. Thus the most general meaning of *bestialitade*, as illustrated in the two passages from the *Convivio* just mentioned, is '*stupidity.*' Compare the French *bêtise*. The word occurs elsewhere in various narrower significations, but always in contrast to some specifically human characteristic or institution. Thus in *Purgatorio*, XXVI. 82-87, it is used for transgression of the specifically human law of marriage; and in *Inferno*, XI. 83, it is used (following the Latin translation of Aristotle's technical term *θηπιόρηνς*) to signify the absence, or violation, of tastes and impulses natural to man, and so for all kinds of monstrous passions and offences.

74. I understand the reference to be not to any suppressed inference, but to that which is drawn out in the following sentences; but if this is so, the syntax is a little strange.

101-113. The argument (if such it can be deemed) appears to be that when our senses are dulled in sleep we are given the power of receiving revelations, which revelations are clearly made to us by spiritual and immortal beings (though possibly they may assume some corporeal shape for the occasion), and since these spiritual beings are themselves immortal and by their action directly actualise, or inform, our capacity for such revelations, it follows that there must be in the perceiving self a something akin to, or commensurable with, the immortal being that acts upon it. Cicero, *De Divinatione*, I. 30, 51, dwells upon (though he does not accept) the doctrine of the prophetic significance of dreams, and bases an argument (differing however from Dante's) for the immortality of the soul upon this phenomenon. The question whether angels assume a bodily form when they appear to men, and, generally, what is the precise nature of theophanies, is discussed in Augustine's third book, *De Trinitate*.

## CHAPTER X

[(a) The complaint of the soul when the old thought is attacked by the new. The soul accuseth the eyes and declareth them guilty of her death.]

RETURNING to the subject, I say that in this verse which begins :

*Findeth such an adversary as destroyeth him,*

Defence  
of the  
ancient  
thought

I intend to reveal what my soul discoursed within me, that is to say the discourse of the ancient *a.* thought in opposition to the new. And first I briefly reveal the cause of her woeful speech, when I say :

*Findeth such an adversary as destroyeth  
him, the humble thought that is wont  
[10] to discourse to me of an angel who  
is crowned in heaven.*

The soul This is that special thought of which it is said  
wails above that it was wont to be the life of the  
grieving heart.

Then when I say :

*The soul wails, so doth she still grieve  
thereat,*

I show that my soul is still on its side, and speaks with sadness ; and I say that she speaks words of lamentation, as though amazed at the sudden change, saying :

*Oh [20] wretched me ! how fleeth that  
tender one who hath consoled me.*

She may rightly say ‘consoled,’ for in her great loss this thought, which would ascend to heaven, had given her great consolation.

Then afterwards, in her excuse, I say that all my thought, to wit my ‘soul,’ of whom I use the phrase ‘this afflicted one,’ turns upon the eyes and denounces them ; and this is manifested here ;

*Of my eyes this afflicted one exclaimeth. [30]*

- i. ii. iii. And I tell how she says three things of them,  
i. and against them ; the first is that she curses the hour when this lady looked upon them. And here be it known that though many things may pass into the eye at the same time, yet the one which comes along the straight line into the centre of the pupil is the only one that is really and truly seen, and that stamps itself upon the imagination. And this is because the nerve along which the visual spirit runs [40] faces in this direction ; and therefore one eye cannot

really look upon another without being seen by it; for just as the one which looks receives the form in the pupil along the straight line, so along that same straight line its form proceeds into the one whereon it is looking; and many times it is in thus directing the straight line that his bow is discharged against whom all arms are light. Wherefore when I say that

The soul  
accuses  
the eyes

*such lady looked upon them* [50]

it is as much as to say that her eyes and mine looked upon one another.

The second thing that she saith is that she ii. rebukes their disobedience, when she saith :

*And wherefore did they not believe me concerning her?*

Then she proceeds to the third thing, and iii. says that the reproach is not hers, as though she had not foreseen, but theirs in that they did not obey; wherefore she says that from time to time, discoursing of this lady, she said, 'In her eyes must [60] needs reside a power over me, were the path of access open to it'; and this she saith here :

*I ever said: 'Verily in her eyes must he needs stand who slays my peers.'*

And in truth we are to believe that my soul recognised its own disposition, prone to receive the efficacy of this lady, and therefore feared her; for the efficacy of the agent is apprehended in the duly disposed patient, as saith the Philosopher in the second *Of the Soul*. And therefore if wax had the spirit of fear, it would more [70]



The soul's pre-sentiment greatly dread coming into the ray of the sun than would a stone; because its disposition receiveth it in more potent operation.

Finally the soul makes manifest in her discourse that their presumption was perilous, when she saith :

*And my perceiving it availed me nought against their gazing upon such an one that I am slain thereby.*

She means, from looking there upon him of whom she has before said, that [80] he 'slays my peers'; and so she ends her words, to which the new thought answers as shall be set forth in the following chapter.

67. The Latin words *pati*, *patiens*, *passio* are all used for the person or thing in any way acted upon. Thus *patient* is opposed to *agent*, in its full extent, and *passion* includes almost any experience or state of mind which cannot be regarded as *action*. In the sequel of this translation *passio* is frequently rendered by *emotion*, as in II. 11: 43.

## CHAPTER XI

[(β) The new thought would (i.) comfort and revive the soul, and then (ii.) lead her to the service of the new lady, by bidding note in her two things that should remove fear and three that should win love.]

The new thought THE meaning has been expounded of that part wherein the soul speaks, to wit the ancient thought which was being destroyed. And now, β. in sequence, the meaning should be explained



of the part wherein the new and adverse thought speaks. And this part is all contained in the verse which begins :

Confidence of the new thought

*Thou art not slain.*

Which part, that it may be rightly understood, is to be divided into two, for in [10] the first i. ii part which begins :

*Thou art not slain, and the rest,*

he proceeds to say (attaching himself to her two final words), 'it is not true that thou art slain, but i. the reason that it seemeth thee that thou art slain is a certain dismay wherein thou art basely fallen, because of the lady who hath appeared to thee.' And here be it noted that, as Boethius saith in his *Consolation*, 'no sudden change of things cometh to pass without [20] some certain running asunder of the mind.' And this is the meaning of the reproof made by that thought. And he is called a 'little spirit of love' to give to understand that my assent was swaying towards him ; and thus what follows may be better understood and his victory recognised, since he says already :

*O soul of ours,*

making himself her familiar.

Then, as was said, he gives command as to ii. what this soul that he reproves is to do to come [30] to this lady, and he thus discourses to her :

*See how tender she is and humble.*

Now these are two things which are the proper remedy for fear, whereby the soul was seen to

Of tenderness and of courtesy be impassioned, and, especially when united, they beget good hope concerning a person; and chiefly tenderness, which maketh every other excellence glow with its light. Wherefore, Virgil, speaking of Æneas, calls him tender as his greatest praise, and tenderness is not [40] what the common herd suppose it to be, namely, grieving at another's woe, which is rather a special effect of it which is called pity, and is an emotion. But tenderness is not an emotion, but rather a noble disposition of mind, ready to receive love, pity and other charitous emotions.

Then he saith, see also how

*sage and courteous in her greatness*

she is. Here he mentions [50] three things, which, amongst things which we have power to acquire, most chiefly make a person pleasing. He says 'sage.' Now, what is more beautiful in woman than to be wise? He says 'courteous.' Nothing is more becoming in woman than courtesy. And let not the wretched vulgar be deceived as to this word also, thinking that courtesy is no other than openhandedness, for openhandedness is a special form of courtesy, and not courtesy in general. Courtesy [60] and honour are all one, and because in courts of old time virtuous and fair manners were in use (as now the contrary), this word was derived from courts, and 'courtesy' was as much as to say 'after the usage of courts.' Which word, if it were now taken from courts, especially of Italy, would mean nought else than baseness. He says 'in her greatness.' Temporal greatness, which is here [70] intended, is then most

comely when accompanied by the two aforesaid excellencies, because it is the light which brings out with clearness the good in a person and its opposite. And how much wisdom and how much virtuous disposition remains concealed by not having this light, and how great madness and how great vices are exposed to view by having this light. Better were it for the wretched magnates, mad, foolish and vicious, to be in base estate, for so neither in [80] the world nor after their lives' end would they be infamous. Truly it is for them that Solomon saith in *Ecclesiastes*: 'Another most grievous infirmity have I seen beneath the sun, to wit riches kept to the hurt of their master.' Then in sequence he lays it upon her (to wit upon my soul) that she is henceforth to call her her lady, promising her that therefrom she will have much solace when she shall be aware of her graces; and this [90] he saith here:

The  
soul's  
new  
mistress

*For if thou deceive not thyself thou shalt see.*

Nor does he speak of aught else even to the end of this verse. And here endeth the literal meaning of all that I say in this ode addressing these celestial intelligences.

11. *He*, namely the 'thought.'

39. *Tenderness*. The Italian is *pietà*.

57. The Italian *cortesia* would in many respects have been better translated 'liberality' or 'generosity' than 'courtesy,' but it was necessary to adopt the latter in order to preserve the etymological connection with *court*.

## CHAPTER XII

[(III.) Of the tornata. Its musical origin and its use by the author for indirect address to his readers. Wherein the excellent meaning of this ode was concealed and wherein its beauteous form was openly displayed.]

Of the **FINALLY** (as the text of this comment said above, tornata when dividing out the chief parts of this ode), I turn me with the face of my discourse to the

III. ode itself, and speak to it. And in order that this part may be the more fully understood I say that generally, in every ode, it is called the tornata, because the poets who were first [10] used to make it, did so in order that when the ode had been sung they should return to it again with a certain part of the air. But I seldom made it with this intention; and, that folk might perceive this, I seldom composed it after the arrangement of the ode, in point of numbers, which is essential to the music; but I made it when there was need to say something for the adornment of the ode outside of its own purport; as [20] may be seen in this and in the others. And therefore I say, for the present turn, that the excellence and the beauty of every discourse are separate and diverse the one from the other; for its excellence lies in its meaning, and its beauty in the adornment of the words; and both the one and the other give delight; although the excellence is most delightful. And so, since the excellence of this ode was difficult to perceive, because of the divers [30] persons who are introduced as speaking, wherein many

divisions are needful, and since the beauty was easy to perceive, meseemed it was for the behoof of the ode that folk should pay more heed to its beauty than to its excellence. And this it is that I declare in this part.

Of presumptuous admonishment

But inasmuch as it often comes to pass that admonishment seems presumptuous under certain conditions, the rhetorician is wont to speak [40] indirectly to a man, addressing his words not to him on whose account he is speaking, but to another. And this method is in fact observed in this instance, for the words are addressed to the ode and their purport to men. I say, then :

*Ode ! I believe that they shall be but rare,*

that is to say few, who 'rightly understand' thee, and I tell the reason, which is twofold. First because thy speech is 'intricate' (I call it 'intricate' for the reason that [50] has been said); and secondly because thy speech is 'knotty' (I call it 'knotty' with reference to the strangeness of the meaning). Now afterwards I admonish it, and say :

*If perchance it come about,*

'that thou go' where are 'folk' who seem to thee to be perplexed by thy discourse, be not thou dismayed; but say to them: 'Since ye perceive not my excellence, give heed at least to my beauty.' For herein I aim at saying nought else (as declared above) save: [60] 'O men, who cannot perceive the meaning of this ode, do not therefore reject it; but give heed to its beauty which is great, both in virtue of syntax, which pertains to grammarians; and in virtue of the

Of excellence and beauty ordering of the discourse, which pertains to rhetoricians; and by virtue of numbers in its parts, which pertains to musicians. Which things may be seen to be beautiful in it by him who giveth good heed. And this is all the [70] literal meaning of the first ode, which is signified by the first-served dish spoken of above.

15. If a part of the air to which the successive stanzas had been sung was to be repeated in the *tornata*, the number of syllables in the several lines of the latter must, of course, correspond line for line with a succession of lines in some portion of the stanza; and Dante says that as a rule he deliberately avoided this coincidence in order to impress upon the reader that his purpose in the *tornata* was dictated by other considerations than those of musical effect. It should be noted, however, that many of Dante's odes conform to the usual practice; and in the majority of them the *tornata* could be sung to a repetition of a part or the whole of the air of the stanza.

### CHAPTER XIII

Turning to the true or inner meaning of the ode, the author tells how, when mourning for Beatrice, he found consolation in Boethius and Tully, and how thereupon this love of Philosophy stole into his heart and obscured the memory of Beatrice. Wherefore he called in dismay upon the powers that move the third heaven.]

The allegory Now that the literal meaning has been adequately explained, we are to proceed to the allegorical and true exposition. And therefore, beginning again from the beginning, I say that when I lost the first delight of my soul, whereof mention is made above, I was pierced by so great

sorrow that no comfort availed me. Yet after a certain time [10] my mind, which was casting about to heal itself, made proof (since neither my own consolation nor that of others availed) to fall back upon the manner which a certain disconsolate one had erst followed to console himself. And I set myself to read that book of Boethius, not known to many, wherein, a captive and an exile, he had consoled himself. And hearing further that Tully had written another book wherein, treating *Of Friendship*, he had touched upon words of the [20] consolation of Lelius, a man of highest excellence, on the death of Scipio his friend, I set myself to reading it. And although it was at first difficult for me to enter into their meaning, finally I entered as deeply into it as my command of Latin, and what little wit I had, enabled me to do; by which wit I already began to perceive many things as in a dream; as may be seen in the *Vita Nuova*.

[30] And as it is wont to chance that a man goeth in search of silver and beyond his purpose findeth gold, the which some hidden cause presents, not, I take it, without divine command; so I, who was seeking to console myself, found not only a cure for my tears, but words of authors, and of sciences, and of books, pondering upon which I judged that Philosophy, who was the lady of these authors, of these sciences, and of these books, [40] was a thing supreme; and I conceived her after the fashion of a gentle lady, and I might not conceive her in any attitude save that of compassion; wherefore the sense for truth so loved to gaze upon her that I

Of consolation

Growing love for philosophy could scarce turn it away from her; and impelled by this imagination of her, I began to go where she was in very truth revealed, to wit, to the schools of the religious orders, and to the disputations of the philosophers; so that in a short time, I suppose some [50] thirty months, I began to feel so much of her sweetness that the love of her expelled and destroyed every other thought. Wherefore, feeling myself raised from the thought of that first love even to the virtue of this, as though in amazement I opened my mouth in the utterance of the ode before us, expressing my state under the figure of other things; because rhyme in any vernacular [60] was unworthy to speak in open terms of the lady of whom I was enamoured; nor were the hearers so well prepared as to have easily apprehended straightforward words; nor would they have given credence to the true meaning, as they did to the fictitious; and, accordingly, folk did, in fact, altogether believe that I had been disposed to this love, which they did not believe of the other. I began therefore to say:

*Ye who by understanding move the third heaven*

[70] And since, as has been said, this lady was daughter of God, queen of all, most noble and most beauteous Philosophy, we are to consider who were these movers, and this third heaven.

*a. b.* And first of the third heaven, according to the order already observed. And there is no need here to proceed to dividing and expounding text by text; for by turning the fictitious words



from their sound to their import the exposition that has already been made will adequately explain this present [80] meaning.

From  
literal to  
allegori-  
cal

On the general question of the relation of the literal to the allegorical meaning of this ode see Appendix, p. 432 ff.

In this and the following treatise the marginal notation to the allegorical interpretation will repeat the notation to the literal interpretation of the corresponding passages, substituting *I. a*, etc., for *I. a*, etc.

14, 15. *Not known to many.* Seeing that in the middle ages the *Consolation* of Boethius was a very popular and well-known book, this phrase has given rise to much speculation. Perhaps Dante only means that few people penetrate its meaning as he did. The whole passage undoubtedly implies that Dante's graver studies were subsequent to Beatrice's death; but the inference which some have drawn, that when he wrote the *Vita Nuova* he was a man without technical learning, is falsified by the work itself, which shows acquaintance with the Latin poets and with several of Aristotle's works, as well as a good knowledge of astronomy.

44. *The sense for truth.* The Italian is *il senso di vero*, i.e., that sense by which the reality of things, as distinct from their appearances, is apprehended. See II. 14: 24, note.

48. The Dominicans and Franciscans were the great teachers of the time.

60. It was still the tradition that love was the only proper subject of vernacular poetry. Compare *Vita Nuova*, § 25. And though Dante himself in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, which was in hand contemporaneously with the *Convivio* (see Appendix, p. 422 ff.), would extend the field to virtue and war (II. 2), yet he says that it had not been appropriated to the latter subject by any Italian; and in his own *Odes* (which he describes as dealing with both love and virtue, I. 1: 104) he is always careful to bring what he has to say, or the occasion for saying it, into some kind of connection with love.

66, 67. His readers did understand him to have been moved by love of a mortal woman. But as he has never till now made the experiment of telling them anything else the passage (if text and rendering are correct) seems singularly inconclusive.

## CHAPTER XIV

[To understand the allegorical meaning of the 'third heaven' we must note that the heavens in general signify the sciences, in virtue of three points of resemblance; and the seven planetary heavens severally represent the seven liberal arts of the Trivium and the Quadrivium, in virtue of two correspondences in each case; so that the third heaven means rhetoric.]

Heaven and science To see what is meant by the third heaven we must first consider what I mean by the word 'heaven' taken by itself; and then it will be clear how and why this third heaven was to our purpose. I say that by heaven I mean science, and by the heavens the sciences, because of three points of similarity which the heavens have with the sciences, especially in connection with their order and their number, wherein they seem to [10] agree, as will be seen when we treat of the word 'third.'

The first point of similarity is that the one and the other revolves round a something that it does not move. For each moving heaven revolves upon its own centre, which is not moved by the motion of that heaven; and in like manner each science moves around its own subject, but does not move it, because no science demonstrates its own [20] subject but presupposes it.

The second point of similarity is the illuminating power of the one and of the other. For each heaven illuminates visible things, and in like manner each science illuminates intelligible things.

And the third point of similarity is that they infuse perfection into things that are duly disposed. Of which infusion, so far as the first perfection, to wit substantial generation, is concerned, all philosophers agree that the heavens are [30] the cause; although they lay it down in different ways, some attributing it to the movers, as Plato, Avicenna and Algazel; some to the stars themselves (especially in the case of human souls) as Socrates and Plato and Dionysius the Academician; and some to celestial virtue which is in the natural heat of the seed, as Aristotle and the other Peripatetics. And in like manner the sciences are the cause in us of the infusion of the second perfection, [40] by the habit of which we can speculate concerning the truth, which is our distinguishing perfection, as saith the Philosopher in the sixth of the *Ethics*, when he says that truth is the good of the intellect. Because of these, together with many other points of similarity, science may be called heaven.

The  
heavens  
and the  
sciences

We are now to examine why the third heaven is mentioned; whereto we must needs consider a comparison that holds [50] between the order of the heavens and that of the sciences. As was narrated above, then, the seven heavens that are first with respect to us are those of the planets; next come two moving heavens above them; and one above them all, which is quiet. To the seven first correspond the seven sciences of the Trivium and of the Quadrivium, to wit grammar, dialectic, rhetoric, arithmetic, music, geometry and astrology. To the eighth, to wit the starry sphere, [60] answers natural science

Grammar which is called physics, and first science which  
 and dia- is called metaphysics. To the ninth sphere  
 lectic answers moral science; and to the quiet heaven  
 answers divine science, which is called theology.  
 And the reason that all this is so must be briefly  
 inspected.

I say that the heaven of the moon is like  
 grammar, as being comparable to it. For if  
 the moon be rightly [70] examined two special  
 things are perceived in her which are not per-  
 ceived in the other stars; the one is the shadow  
 upon her which is nought else than the rarity of  
 her substance, whereon the rays of the sun may  
 not be stayed and thrown back, as from her  
 other parts; the other is the variation of her  
 luminosity, which now shines from the one side  
 and now from the other, according as the sun  
 looks upon her. And these two properties  
 grammar [80] possesses; for because of its  
 infinity the rays of reason cannot be arrested,  
 especially in the direction of words; and it  
 shines now on this side, now on that, in so far  
 as certain words, certain declensions, certain  
 constructions are now in use which were not  
 of old, and many once were which shall be  
 again; as Horace says in the beginning of his  
*Poesy*, when he says: 'Many words shall be  
 born again, which have now fallen,' and the rest.

[90] And the heaven of Mercury may be  
 compared to dialectic in virtue of two special  
 properties; for Mercury is the smallest star of  
 heaven; for the magnitude of his diameter is not  
 more than two hundred and thirty-two miles,  
 as Alfraganus states it, saying that it is one  
 twenty-eighth part of the diameter of the earth,

which is six thousand five hundred miles. The other special property is that its orbit is more veiled by the rays [100] of the sun than that of any other star. And these two properties belong to dialectic; for dialectic is smaller in its body than any other science; for it is completely constructed and terminated in so much of text as is contained in the *Old Art* and in the *New*; and its orbit is more veiled than that of any other science, inasmuch as it proceeds with more sophisticated arguments and more disputable than any other.

Rhetoric  
and arith-  
metic

[110] And the heaven of Venus may be compared to rhetoric because of two special properties: the one is the brightness of her aspect, which is sweeter to look upon than any other star, the other is her appearing now at morn and now at even. And these two properties characterise rhetoric; for rhetoric is the sweetest of all the other sciences, since this is what it chiefly aims at. It appears at morn when the rhetorician speaks [120] before the face of his hearer, it appears at even, that is from behind, when the rhetorician discourses through writing, from the distant side.

And the heaven of the sun may be compared to arithmetic because of two special properties; the one is that all the other stars are informed by his light; the other that the eye may not look on him. And these two properties are seen in arithmetic, for by its light all the sciences are lightened; for [130] all their subjects are considered under some numerical aspect, and in the consideration of them there is always a numerical process. As in natural

Music science, mobile matter is the subject, which mobile matter has in itself the principle of continuity, and this has in itself the principle of infinite number. And as for the speculations of natural science they are chiefly concerned with the principles of natural things, which are three, to wit material, [140] privation and form; in which we see that there is not only number collectively, but there is also number in each one severally, if we consider subtly. Wherefore Pythagoras, as Aristotle says in the first of the [*Meta*] *physics*, laid down 'even' and 'odd' as the principles of natural things, considering all things to be number. The second property of the sun is also seen in number, with which arithmetic is concerned, for [150] the eye of the intellect may not look upon it; because number, considered in itself, is infinite, and such we may not understand.

And the heaven of Mars may be compared to music, by two properties; the one is the special beauty of its relation to the others; for if we count the revolving heavens, whether we begin from the lowest or the highest this same heaven of Mars is the fifth; and so it is half way [160] between every pair, that is to say, the two first, the two second, the two third, the two fourth. The second is that this same Mars drieth and burneth things, because his heat is like to the heat of fire; and this is why he appeareth enkindled in colour, sometimes more and sometimes less, according to the thickness and rarity of the vapours which follow him; which vapours often blaze up of themselves, as is established in the first of the [170] *Meteorics*. And there-

fore Albumassar says that the kindling of these vapours signifies the death of kings and the transmutation of kingdoms, because they are effects of the lordship of Mars. And therefore Seneca says that at the death of the Emperor Augustus he saw aloft a globe of fire. And in Florence, at the beginning of its ruin, was seen in the air, in the figure of a cross, a great quantity of these vapours that follow the [180] star of Mars. And these two properties are found in music, which all consists in relations, as we perceive in harmonised words and in tunes; wherefrom the resulting harmony is the sweeter in proportion as the relation is more beauteous; which relation is the chiefest beauty in that science, because this is what it chiefly aims at. Moreover, music so draweth to itself the spirits of men (which are in principle as though vapours of the heart) that [190] they well-nigh cease from all operation; so united is the soul when it hears it, and so does the virtue of all of them, as it were, run to the spirit of sense which receiveth the sound.

And the heaven of Jove may be compared to geometry for two special properties; the one is that it moveth between two heavens repugnant to its own fair temperance, to wit that of Mars and that of Saturn. Wherefore Ptolemy saith, in the book I have cited, that Jove [200] is a star of temperate composition betwixt the cold of Saturn and the heat of Mars. The other is that he shows white among the stars, as though of silver. And these things characterise the science of geometry. Geometry moves between two things repugnant to itself, to wit the



Astrology point and the circle (and I use 'circle' in the larger sense of everything round, whether body or surface); for according to Euclid [210] the point is its beginning, and according to what he says the circle is its most perfect figure, which must therefore needs have the nature of an end. So that geometry moves between the point and the circle as between its beginning and its end. And these two are repugnant to its certainty; for the point, because of its indivisibility, cannot be measured, and the circle, because of its curve, is impossible to square perfectly, and therefore is impossible to measure [220] exactly. And, moreover, geometry is supremely white, in so far as it is without taint of error, and is most certain both in itself and in its handmaid which is called perspective.

And the heaven of Saturn has two properties by which it may be compared to astrology; the one is the slowness of its movement through the twelve signs; for its orbit needs the [230] time of twenty-nine years and more, according to the writings of astrologers; the other is that it is exalted above all the other planets. These two properties characterise astrology, for in completing its circle, that is to say in learning it, a most long space of time revolves, both because of its demonstrations, which are more than those of any other of the above-named sciences, and because of the observation which is needed rightly to judge in it. And further, it is more exalted than all the rest, because [240], as Aristotle says in the beginning *Of the Soul*, a science is exalted in nobility by the nobleness of its subject-matter and by its certainty. And



this, more than any of the above-mentioned, is noble and exalted by the nobility and exaltation of its subject-matter, which concerns the movement of heaven; and it is exalted and ennobled by its certainty, which is without any flaw, being that it cometh from the most perfect and regular principle. And if any [250] suppose that there be a flaw in it, it is not on its side, but, as Ptolemy says, it is because of our negligence, and thereto should it be imputed.

No flaw  
in as-  
trology

This chapter is full of curious and interesting matter, but it would be vain to attempt to find any real penetration or wisdom in its fantastic analogies. We may sympathise with the idea that there is a hierachy of the sciences, and further with the idea that 'all things are double one against another,' so that the intellectual and physical worlds must be in some kind of correspondence with each other; but beyond this we shall find only ingenuity at best in the correspondences insisted upon.

24. *Intelligible* is used by Dante in contrast to *sensible*. Sensible things can be perceived by the senses, intelligible things by the intellect *only*. Thus the phrase *non-intelligible things* comes to mean things of which (since they are not accessible to the intellect alone) sense can take cognisance. Compare III. 12: 44-59. The relation of the sensible to the intelligible is illustrated in a passage of great beauty in Augustine's *Soliloquies* (I. 9), where, in speaking of mathematics, he compares the sense impressions on which the conception of a line or a sphere is founded to a ship which carries us up to a country we wish to visit, but cannot take us into it; for it is no more possible really to understand mathematics as long as we adhere to the sense impressions than it would be to sail in a ship upon the dry land, but we cannot get to them except by the aid of sense impressions.

26. *Perfection*. The Latin *perfectio* is a translation of Aristotle's technical term *ἐντελέχεια*, the 'being-at-its-goal-ness' of a thing. For instance, if an organised body is capable of life, then it has received its entelechy

as soon as it lives; and yet life itself is a series of capacities, and these capacities have not received their entelechies until they have realised or actualised themselves. Hence the definition of the 'soul,' or 'life,' as the 'first entelechy of a natural organic body.' It will be seen that form and entelechy are closely related conceptions, the difference being that the form is the essential quality, or group of qualities, and the entelechy is the possession or realisation of them. In the present passage Dante regards the existence of man (as a 'substance' or independent being) as his first entelechy, and the specifically human possession of knowledge as his second entelechy. Compare I. 13: 16-44.

32. Plato (427-347 B.C.). Avicenna (978-1037 A.D.) was the most celebrated of the Eastern, or old, school of Arabic philosophers. He wrote Aristotelian treatises after the fashion subsequently followed by Albertus Magnus. That is to say, he did not comment upon the text of Aristotle's works, but paraphrased it and incorporated it in treatises of his own, with identical titles. Algazel (1059-1111 A.D.), though a student of philosophy, was the representative of a theological reaction against it. He wrote a *Refutation of the Philosophers*, which Averroes subsequently combated in his turn in the *Refutation of the Refutation*.

34. Socrates (468-399 B.C.). Toynbee thinks that by 'Dionysius the Academician' Dante means Dionysius the Areopagite (*Acts*, xvii. 34). He was the supposed author of treatises on angel-lore and kindred matters, whose authority Dante followed in the *Paradiso*. The real date of these works is a matter of dispute, but is certainly not earlier than the fourth century.

36. Compare IV. 21: 1-48.

43 f. *Good of the intellect*. Compare *Inferno*, III. 18.

73-76. See Dante's recantation of this explanation of the shadows on the moon in *Paradiso*, II. 49-105. As to the analogy with grammar, Dante appears to mean that whereas you can give *rules* of grammar (or language) you can seldom give *reasons* for its ultimate phenomena, especially the composition of its vocabulary, so that its foundations baffle reason.

83-89. Compare I. 5: 50-52, *note*.

105-106. The *Old Art* consisted of Porphyry's *Intro-*

duction, Aristotle's *Categories* and *De Interpretatione*, both translated by Boethius, and (subsequently) Gilbert de la Porrée's *Sex Principia*. The *New Art* consisted of the rest of Aristotle's *Organon*. Porphyry, third century A.D., Gilbert de la Porrée, 1070-1154 A.D.

108. *Disputable*. Italian *probabili*. Compare IV. 18 : 8 (and 19 : 10), *note*.

125. It was the general opinion that the stars were illuminated by the sun. Compare III. 12 : 55 ff., *Paradiso*, XX. 6, *Ode XI*. 117, and many other passages.

135. The difference between discontinuous quantity, *i.e.*, number, and continuous quantity, *i.e.*, magnitude, was perfectly well understood by Aristotle and the mediæval scholars, who had a very firm grasp of the conception of incommensurability, and, by implication, of limits. In this passage Dante insists on continuous magnitudes being capable of infinite subdivision, and therefore, when treated numerically, implying the principle of infinite number.

140. All *material* (whether *first matter*, or the elements of things prepared by nature or by art) has certain capacities or potentialities. The state of existence in which such material has not actually received the development of which it is capable is *privation*. The realised potentialities which make a thing this or that, not in potentiality but in actuality, are its *form*. Dante rightly defines physics, as understood in his day, to be concerned with these three conceptions. *Privation*, it will be seen, can only exist in a subject capable of receiving the form with respect to which the privation is said to exist. There is no privation of life in a stone, or of speech in a brute beast. *Subject* and *material* are therefore allied conceptions.

It does not at first strike us as natural to call the essential characteristics of a thing its *form*. But it is the form of a statue or a chest (not its material) that makes it what it is; and if we said we believed that the elements were all different *forms* of one substance, we should be calling their differentiating characteristics their forms. Thus to the scholastic philosophy the *form* of a plant (*i.e.*, what made it a plant and not something else) was 'the life of nutrition and reproduction, without the life of sense,' and so forth.

142. *Number*, that is ratio, relation or measurement.

144. On the vexed question of the Pythagorean conception of numbers as entities we cannot enter here.

170. *Albumassar*, an Arabic astronomer (805-885 A.D.).

191. Compare *Purgatorio*, IV. 1-12.

199. *Ptolemy* (second century A.D.). Dante has referred to him in II. 3: 36, but has not quoted any special work. It seems doubtful how far he was acquainted with him at first hand.

218. Compare *Paradiso*, XXXIII. 133-135, and *note*.

## CHAPTER XV

[Again, the starry heaven represents physics and metaphysics, in virtue of three correspondences with each. The *primum mobile* corresponds to ethics. And the peace of the unmoved empyrean corresponds to theology,]

Physics and metaphysics  
 AFTER the comparisons made concerning the seven first heavens, we are to proceed (as more than once declared) to the others, which are three. I say that the starry heaven may be compared to physics because of three properties, and to metaphysics because of three others; for it displays to us two visible objects, to wit the multitude of stars and the milky way, which is that white circle which the vulgar call [10] Saint Jacob's Way; and it reveals one of its poles to us and conceals the other from us; and it reveals one only motion to us, from east to west, and the other, which it makes from west to east, it well-nigh conceals from us. Wherefore in due order we are to consider first its comparison with physics and then with metaphysics.

I say that the starry heaven reveals a multitude of stars to us, for according to the observation of the sages of Egypt [20] they reckon, inclusive of the extremest star which appears to them in the south, a thousand and twenty-two separate stars; and it is of them that I am speaking. And herein it hath the greatest resemblance to physics, if we subtly consider these three numbers, to wit two, twenty, and a thousand; for by two we understand local movement, which is of necessity from one point to another. And by twenty is signified movement by modification; [30] for since, after ten, we can only proceed by modifying ten itself, by means of the other nine and of itself (the most elegant modification it receives being its own modification by itself), and since the first which it receives is twenty, it is fitting that the said movement should be signified by this number. And by a thousand is signified the movement of growth; for this 'thousand' is the highest number that has a name of its own, and there can [40] be no further growth save by multiplying it. And physics manifests these three movements only, as is proved in the fifth of the fundamental treatise about it.

And because of the milky way this heaven hath great likeness to metaphysics. Wherefore we are to know that concerning this milky way philosophers have held divers opinions. For the Pythagoreans said that once upon a time the sun strayed in his course, and passing through other [50] portions not suited to his heat scorched the place along which he passed;

The and this appearance of scorching was left there.  
 milky And I believe that they were moved thereto by  
 way the fable of Phaëton, which Ovid tells in the  
 beginning of the second of the *Metamorphoses*.  
 Others (of whom were Anaxagoras and Democritus) said that it was caused by the light of the sun reflected in this part. And these opinions they supported by arguments of proof. What [60] Aristotle may have said on this point cannot be rightly known, because his opinion does not appear the same in one translation as in the other. And I suppose there must have been a mistake made by the translators; for in the new he seems to say that it is a congregation of vapours beneath the stars of that region, which ever draw them up; and this doth not seem to set forth a true cause. In the old he says that the milky way is nought else than a multitude [70] of fixed stars, in that region, so small that from here below we may not distinguish them, though they produce the appearance of that glow which we call the milky way; † and it may be that the heaven in that region is denser, and therefore arrests and throws back the light †; and this opinion seems to be shared with Aristotle by Avicenna and Ptolemy. Wherefore, inasmuch as the milky way is an effect of those stars which we may [80] not see, save that we are aware of these things by their effect, and metaphysics treats of the primal existences, which in like manner we may not understand save by their effects, it is manifest that the starry heaven hath great similitude to metaphysics.

Further, the pole that we see signifies the

things of sense, of which, taken in their full compass, physics treats; [90] and the pole that we see not signifies things that are immaterial and are not sensible, whereof metaphysics treats; and therefore the said heaven hath great similitude to the one science and to the other. Further, by its two movements it signifies these two sciences; for by the movement wherewith it revolveth day by day, and maketh a fresh return from point to point, it signifieth the corruptible things of nature, which day by [100] day complete their course, and their material changeth from form to form; and of these physics treats. And by the almost insensible movement which it makes from west to east, at the rate of a degree in a hundred years, it signifieth the incorruptible things which had of God a created beginning and shall have no end; and of these metaphysics treats. And this is why I say that this movement signifieth them, because the circulation in question had a beginning [110] and shall have no end; for the end of a circulation is returning to one identical point, and this heaven shall never return to such with reference to this movement. For since the beginning of the world it has revolved little more than one-sixth part; and we are already in the final age of the world, and are verily awaiting the consummation of the celestial movement. And so it is manifest that the starry heaven, because of many properties, may be compared to physics and to [120] metaphysics.

The two movements of the starry sphere

The crystalline heaven, which has been counted above as the *primum mobile*, has very



**Ethics** manifest comparison with moral philosophy; because, as Thomas, on the second of the *Ethics* says, it disposes us rightly for the other sciences. For, as says the Philosopher in the fifth of the *Ethics*, legal justice regulates the sciences with a view to [130] learning, and commands them to be learnt and taught that they be not forsaken; and so doth the said heaven regulate with its movement the daily revolution of all the others, whereby every day they all receive from above the virtue of all their parts. For if the revolution of this heaven did not thus regulate the same, little of their virtue would come down here, and little sight of them. Wherefore suppose it were possible for this [140] ninth heaven not to move, in any given place on earth a third part of the heaven would never yet have been seen; and Saturn would be fourteen years and a half concealed from any given place on the earth; and Jove would be concealed for six years; and Mars about a year; and the sun one hundred and eighty-two days and fourteen hours (I say 'days' to signify the length of time which so many days measure); and Venus and Mercury would be concealed and revealed about [150] like the sun; and the moon for fourteen days and a half would be hidden from all folk.

Of a truth there would be no generation here below, nor life of animal nor plant; night would not be, nor day, nor week, nor month, nor year; but all the universe would be disordered, and the movement of the other heavens would be in vain. And, not otherwise, were moral philosophy to cease, the other sciences would



be hidden [160] a certain space, and there would be no generation, nor life, nor felicity; and in vain would the other sciences have been written down and discovered of old. Whereby it is right clear that this heaven may be compared to moral philosophy. Theology

Further, the empyrean heaven in virtue of its peace is like the divine science, which is full of all peace, which suffereth not any strife of opinions or of sophistical arguments, because of the most excellent certainty of its [170] subject-matter, which is God. And of it saith he himself unto his disciples: 'My peace I give unto you, my peace I leave with you,' giving and leaving them his teaching, which is this science whereof I speak.

Of her saith Solomon: 'Sixty are the queens and eighty are the concubines, and of the young maidens there is no number; one is my dove and my perfect one.' All the sciences he calls queens and paramours and [180] handmaidens, and this he calls dove because it is without taint of strife, and this he calls perfect because it makes us see the truth perfectly, wherein our soul is quieted.

And so, this comparison of the heavens and the sciences being expounded, we may perceive that by the third heaven I mean rhetoric, which resembles the third heaven as appears above.

25. The idea that numbers represent cosmic principles is a characteristic conception of mediæval arithmetic, perhaps ultimately derived from the Pythagoreans. In detail there was much room for diversity and fluctuation.

27-43. Aristotle regarded all change as movement; local transference, internal modification (*alteratio*) and

growth being its three forms (*Physics*, V. i.). [Dante gives the reference as *nel quinto del primo suo libro*, i.e., 'in the fifth book of its ('it' being 'physics') first (fundamental) treatise.' This has been understood as 'the fifth chapter of the first book of the *Physics*,' and has been regarded as a false reference.] Dante regards any mental or spiritual *change* as a 'spiritual movement' (*Purgatorio*, XVIII. 32).

64-68. The *New* translation was the one made direct from the Greek for the use of Thomas Aquinas, the *Old* was an earlier translation, made from the Arabic and used by Albertus Magnus. Dante correctly reports the purport of the two translations of this passage, but is mistaken in his inference that the *New* is a less correct translation of Aristotle's words. The earlier translator had evidently attempted to improve on Aristotle from his own better information.

73-76. The words I have placed between daggers seem to disturb the context.

82. By 'primal existences' Dante perhaps means *first matter*, and the *angels* (who are pure 'form'). Neither of these is accessible to the senses.

114 and 140 ff. It appears that Dante supposed the world to have existed, roughly speaking, six thousand years in his day. For so the proper motion of the stars would have passed through  $60^\circ$ , or one-sixth of the total revolution. (The current estimates would have made it nearer seven thousand.) Selecting a spot of earth in the most favourable position, that is on the equator, half the heaven would have been visible at the creation, and one-sixth more would have come into view since, making altogether two-thirds. The other third would never have appeared to it.

127-132. The reference appears to be inexact, but it is perfectly true that Aristotle insisted on the necessity of state provision for education.

138. Dante here supposes the diurnal rotation of the earth to be arrested. Compare the similar passage in *Paradiso*, X. 13-21, where he traces the consequences of the proper motions of the other revolving spheres being reduced to direct opposition to the daily motion.

147 f. There would be no 'day,' so the word can only be used as an expression for a certain space of time.

## CHAPTER XVI

[From all which it follows that the movers of the third heaven are the rhetoricians. And all the details explain themselves. When the light of philosophy breaks upon us it smites us with love, at first troubled and beset with difficulties but then clear and triumphant ; so that we quit, with whatever regret, all other loves for this, and in their death find higher life, seeing into the heart of wondrous things. And thus the author declares that his second Love was no other than the Wisdom of God.]

IN virtue of the similitudes now expounded it may be seen who are those movers whom I address, which move this heaven ; such as Boethius and Tully, who with the sweetness of their discourse set me upon the way of love, as related above, (that is to say, devotion to this most gentle lady Philosophy), with the rays of their star, which is the scripture that concerns her ; for, in [10] every science, scripture is a star, full charged with light, which showeth forth that science. And when this is understood we may see the true meaning of the first verse of the ode before us by means of the fictitious and literal exposition. And by means of this same exposition we may adequately understand the second verse up to the place where it says :

*He makes me gaze upon a lady,*

where you are to know that this [20] lady is Philosophy ; who in truth is a lady full of sweetness, adorned with honour, wondrous in wisdom, glorious in freedom, as in the third treatise, where

The her nobleness will be dealt with, shall be made  
 demon- manifest.  
 strations of philo- And in the place where it says :  
 sophy

*Who would behold salvation heedfully  
 let him look upon this lady's eyes,*

the eyes of this lady are her demonstrations, the which, when turned upon the eyes of the intellect, enamour that soul which is [30] free in its conditions. Oh most sweet and unutterable looks, of a sudden ravishing the human mind, which appear in the demonstrations in the eyes of Philosophy, when she discourses to her lovers! Verily in you is the salvation whereby whoso looketh on you is blessed, and saved from the death of ignorance and of vice.

Where it says :

*If he fear not the anguish of sighings ;*

there must be understood, if he fear [40] not the toil of study, and the strife of perplexities which rise in manifold fashion from the beginning of the glances of this lady, and then as her light continueth fall away like morning clouds from the face of the sun; and the intellect that hath become her familiar remains free and full of certainty, even as is the air purged and lightened by the mid-day rays.

b. The third verse likewise may be understood by the literal exposition up to where it says [50]

*the soul wails.*

Here we must give good heed to a certain moral which may be noted in these words; namely,

that a man ought not, because of a greater friend, to forget the services received from the lesser; but if it really behoves him to follow the one and leave the other, when he follows the better the other is not to be abandoned without some fitting lamentation; wherein he giveth cause to the one he followeth of all the greater love.

The  
fascina-  
tion of  
study

Then when it saith 'of my eyes' it means [60] nought else save that mighty was the hour when the first demonstration of this lady entered into the eyes of my intellect, which was the most immediate cause of this enamourment. And where it saith 'my peers' souls are meant that are free from wretched and vile delights, and from the ways of the vulgar, endowed with intellect and memory. And then it saith 'slays,' and then saith 'am slain,' which seems counter to [70] what was said above of this lady's saving power. And therefore be it known that here one of the sides is speaking, and there the other, which two contend diversely, according as was expounded above. Wherefore it is no marvel if the one says yea, and the other nay, if it be rightly noted which is declining and which ascending. Then in the fourth verse, where it says 'a little spirit of love,' it means a thought which springs from my study. Wherefore be it [80] known that by love in this allegory is always meant that very study which is the application of the mind enamoured of a thing to that thing itself. Then when it saith :

*Thou shalt see adornment of such lofty miracles,*  
it declares that through her shall be per-

Philosophy the author's love  
 ceived the adornments of the miracles; and it says true, for the adornment of marvels is the perception of the causes of them, which is what she demonstrates, as the Philosopher appears to feel in the beginning of the [90] *Metaphysics*, when he says that by perceiving these adornments men begin to be enamoured of this lady. And of this word, to wit marvel, there will be fuller discourse in the following treatise. All the rest of this ode which follows is adequately explained by the other exposition. And so, at the close of this second treatise, I declare and affirm that the lady of whom I [100] was enamoured after my first love was the most fair and noble daughter of the Emperor of the universe, to whom Pythagoras gave the name of Philosophy. And here ends the second treatise, which is served as the first course.

28. Compare III. 15 : 12-18.

56. Compare *Purgatorio*, XXX. 49 ff.

61. Compare III. 15 : 12-18 (as above).

94. See III. 7 : 155-183 and XIV. 127-141.

98-103. Mr Gardner regards *Paradiso* VIII. 34-37, as a virtual recantation of this assertion and an admission that the ode was originally a true love poem.

# THE THIRD TREATISE

## ODE II

*Amor, che nella mente mi ragiona.*

### I

LOVE that discourses to me in my mind yearningly of  
my lady moveth many a time such things with me  
anent her that my intellect loses its way concerning  
them.

His discourse soundeth so sweetly that the soul that  
heareth him and feeleth cryeth: 'Oh me! that I have  
not power to tell that which I hear about my lady.' [8]

And verily it behoveth me first to drop,

Would I treat of that which I hear of her, all that  
my intellect apprehendeth not: and of that which it  
understandeth great part, because I should not know  
to tell it. Wherefore if defect shall mark my  
rhymes, which shall enter upon her praises, for  
this let our feeble intellect be blamed, and our speech  
which hath not power to tell again all that love  
speaketh. [18]

### II

The sun seeth not, who circleth all the world, a  
thing so gentle as in that hour when he shineth on  
the place where sojourneth the lady of whom love con-  
straineth me to speak. [22]

Every supernal intellect gazes upon her, and such  
folk as are here enamoured still find her in their  
thoughts when love maketh them feel of his peace. [26]

Her being is to him who gives it her so pleasing

That he ever poureth his power into her, beyond  
what our nature asketh. Her pure soul, which

receiveth from him this salvation, maketh it show  
 forth in that which she doth guide; for her beauties  
 are things clear to view, and the eyes of those in whom  
 she shineth send messages thereof to the heart filled  
 with longings which gather air and turn to sighs. [36]

## III

On her descendeth the divine power as it doth upon  
 an angel who beholdeth it, and whatsoever gentle lady  
 not believeth this, let her go with her and mark well  
 her gestures.

Where she speaks there cometh down a spirit from  
 heaven who gives us faith that the lofty worth which  
 she possesses transcends all that consorts with our  
 nature. [44]

The sweet gestures which she shows to others

Go calling upon love, each vying with the other, in  
 that voice which maketh him to hear. Of her it may  
 be said: *Gentle is that in lady which in her is  
 found; and beauteous is so much only as is like to  
 her.* And affirm we may that to look on her gives  
 help to accept that which seems a miracle; where-  
 by our faith is aided; therefore from eternity such  
 was she ordained. [54]

## IV

Things are revealed in her aspect which show us of  
 the joys of Paradise, I mean in her eyes and in her  
 sweet smile, which love assigneth there as to their  
 proper place. [58]

They transcend our intellect, as the sun's ray the  
 feeble vision: and because I may not gaze fixedly upon  
 them, needs must I content me with scant speech of  
 them. [62]

Her beauty rains down flamelets of fire,

Made living by a gentle spirit, which is the  
 creator of every good thought: and they shatter  
 like thunder the inborn vices that make folk  
 vile; wherefore whatsoever lady heareth her



beauty           blamed for not seeming tranquil and  
 humble,           let her gaze on her who is the pattern of  
 humility.       It is she who humbleth each perverse  
 one:             of her was he thinking who set the universe  
 in motion.   [72]

*Tornata*

Ode! it seemeth that thy speech is counter       to the  
 utterance of a little sister whom thou hast;     for this lady  
 whom thou makest to be humble,                 she calleth cruel and  
 disdainful.   [76]

Thou knowest that the heaven is ever shining and  
 clear,         and as concerns itself is disturbed never;     but  
 our eyes, for many a cause,                     call the star clouded, time  
 and time again,   [80]

So when she calleth her orgulous,

She considereth her not according to the truth,     but  
 only according as to her she appeared;           for the soul was  
 in terror,       aye and is in such terror yet, that it seemeth to  
 me a dire thing       whensoever I look where she perceiveth  
 me.     Thus plead thy excuse if thou have need;     and,  
 when thou canst, present thyself to her,         and say: 'My  
 lady, if it be acceptable to thee,             I will discourse of thee  
 on every side.'   [90]

## CHAPTER I

[Of the occasion of this ode in praise of the author's second love. How, though bewildered by excess of love, he yet had the wit, or instinct, to recognise three reasons for speaking in his lady's praise. Of the three main divisions of the ode.]

Love of As hath been told in the preceding treatise, my  
 philo- second love took its beginning from the com-  
 sophy passionate semblance of a lady. Which love after-  
 ward, finding my life disposed for its ardour,  
 kindled, after the fashion of fire, from a little  
 flame to a great; so that, not only when I woke  
 but when I slept, into my head was light from her  
 guided; and [10] how great was the yearning  
 which love gave me to see her could neither be  
 uttered nor comprehended. And not only of her  
 was I thus desirous, but of all those persons who  
 were in any ways connected with her, whether by  
 intimacy or by any tie of kinship. Oh how  
 many nights there were wherein the eyes of  
 others were resting, closed in sleep, and mine  
 were fixedly [20] gazing on the abiding-place  
 of my love! And since the redoubled con-  
 flagration must needs reveal itself outwardly  
 (because it cannot possibly remain concealed)  
 a wish came upon me to speak of love, which I  
 was utterly unable to restrain. And though I  
 might have but little command over my own  
 counsel, yet I so far approached it from time to  
 time, either by the will of love or by my own  
 eagerness, that I comprehended and perceived  
 that, in speaking of love, there was no more fair  
 nor [30] profitable discourse than that which  
 commended the loved person.

And this deliberation was inspired by three Reasons for praising philosophy  
 reasons ; of which the first was the proper love of myself, which is the beginning of all the rest ; even as everyone perceives that there is no more legitimate nor more gracious method of a man doing honour to himself than by honouring his friend. For, [40] inasmuch as friendship may not be between unlikes, wheresoever friendship is perceived likeness is understood to be ; and wheresoever likeness is understood to be, praise and blame run common. And from this argument two great lessons may be learnt ; the one is, not to be willing that any vicious one should show himself to be our friend, because therein an evil opinion of him to whom he shows himself friendly is conceived ; and the other is that [50] no one should blame his friend publicly, because—if the preceding reason be rightly considered—he is thereby thrusting a finger into his own eye.

The second reason was the desire to perpetuate this friendship. Wherefore you are to know that, as saith the Philosopher in the ninth of the *Ethics*, in the friendship of folk of unlike condition there must be, in order to preserve it, a certain proportion between [60] them, which shall in a way reduce the unlikeness to likeness ; as in the case of a master and servant. For although the servant cannot render a like benefit to his master when he receives a benefit from him, he must nevertheless render such as he best can, with so much zeal and openness that that which is unlike in itself shall be made like by the manifestation of goodwill, which reveals and confirms and preserves the friendship. [70]

Reasons for praising philosophy  
 i. ii. iii.  
 i.

Against the blame of lightly changed love Wherefore I, reflecting upon my inferiority to this lady, and seeing myself benefited by her, [resolved] to commend her according to my power; if the which be not like in itself [to hers], at least my zealous will shows that, if I could do more, more would I do; and so it likens itself to that of this gentle lady.

- iii. The third reason was a motive prompted by forethought; for as says Boethius: 'It doth not suffice to look only upon that which is [80] before the eyes, to wit the present; and therefore forethought is given to us, which looks beyond, even to that which may come to pass.' I mean that I reflected that by many who come after me I might perchance be reproved for lightness of mind when they heard that I had changed from my first love. Wherefore, to remove this blame, there was no better means than to tell of the quality of the lady who had changed me. For by the manifestation of her excellence [90] consideration of her power might accrue; and when her supreme power was understood it might be thought that no stability of mind could resist being changed by her; and so I might not be deemed light or unstable. I undertook, therefore, to speak this lady's praise, and, if not in fashion as were fitting, at least so far forth as I might; and I began to say:

*Love, that discourses to me in my mind.*

- I. II. III. [100] This ode has three chief parts. The first is all the first verse, wherein the discourse is by way of proem. The second is all the three following verses, wherein is treated that which it is the purport of the ode to utter; to wit, the

praise of this gentle one. And the first of these begins :

Order  
of the  
discourse

*The sun seeth not, who circleth all the world.*

The third part is the fifth and last verse, wherein, directing my words to the ode, I purge her [110] of a certain difficulty. And of these three parts we are to discourse in order.

29-32. It was not the first time Dante had had to learn this. See *Vita Nuova*, §§ 18, 19.

36. Compare *Purgatorio*, XVII. 106-111.

62 ff. Compare *Epistle* to Can Grande, ll. 58-76.

## CHAPTER II

[(I.) Of the threefold division of this first section, treating (*a*) of the ineffable theme, (*b*) of the author's insufficiency, and (*c*) of the excuses for the same. But first of (i.) love. How the soul, being of divine origin, shares the divine will to be, and so seeks to strengthen its existence by communion with the supreme Existence; and therefore, again, desires to penetrate to the divine essence of the things of nature, where it holds such communion with God; which desire is no other than the love of wisdom, in proportion to their possession of which the nobility of human souls may be judged. And also of (ii.) the mind, which is the most consummate and divine factor of human life.]

ADDRESSING myself then to the first part, which was ordained as proem of this ode, I say that we must divide it into three parts. For first, the ineffable quality of the theme is touched upon; secondly, my insufficiency to deal per-

The  
proem

I.

Of love fectly with it is set forth ; and this second part *a, b, c.* begins :

*And verily it behoveth me first to drop.*

Finally [10] I excuse myself for my insufficiency, for which no fault should be found with me ; and this I begin when I say :

*Wherefore, if defect shall mark my rhymes.*

I say then :

*Love that discourses to me in my mind,*

where, in the first place, we are to consider who  
 i. ii. this is who discourses, and what that place is  
 wherein I assert that he makes discourse.

i. Love, truly taken and subtly considered, is  
 nought else than a spiritual [20] union of the  
 soul and of the loved thing ; to which union the  
 soul, in virtue of its own nature, runs swift or  
 slow according as it is free or impeded. And  
 the reason of this natural property may be that  
 every substantial form proceeds from its own first  
 cause, which is God, as is written in the *Book  
 of Causes* ; and they derive their diversities not  
 from it, for it is most simple, but from the  
 secondary [30] causes or from the material  
 upon which it descends ; wherefore, in that same  
 book, in treating of the infusion of the divine  
 goodness it is written : ‘ And make the excel-  
 lences and the gifts diverse, in virtue of the  
 co-operation of the thing which receives.’  
 Wherefore, inasmuch as every effect retains  
 something of the nature of its cause (as Alpe-  
 tragius says when he affirms that what is caused  
 by a circular body has, in a certain fashion, a

Of the  
soul's  
likeness  
to God

circular existence), [40] every form possesses, in a fashion, the existence of the divine nature; not that the divine nature is divided and communicated to them; but it is participated by them, something after the mode wherein the sun is by participation in the other stars. And the more noble the form is the more does it retain of this nature. Wherefore the human soul, which is the noblest form of all those that are generated beneath the heaven, receives more of the divine [50] nature than any other. And since it is most germane to the nature of God to will to be (because, as we read in the aforesaid book, 'being comes first of all, and before that there is nought'), the human soul naturally desires, with the whole force of its longing, to be. And because its being depends on God, and by him is preserved, it naturally desires and wills to be united to God, in order to fortify its own being. And because it is in the excellences [60] of nature that the divine principle reveals itself, it comes to pass that the human soul naturally unites herself with them in spiritual fashion, the more swiftly and the more mightily in proportion as they appear more perfect. And they so appear in proportion as the soul's power of recognition is clear or obstructed. And this union it is which we call love, whereby the inner quality of the soul may be recognised by examining outwardly the things which [70] it loves. This love, to wit the union of my soul with this gentle lady, in whom full much of the divine light was revealed to me, is he who discourses, and of whom I speak; because from him unbroken thoughts had birth, by gazing and pondering upon

Of the the worth of this lady, who was spiritually made  
 mind one thing with my soul.

- ii. The place wherein I say that he discoursed is the mind, but to say that it is the [80] mind gives us no more understanding of it than before ; and therefore we are to examine what this word mind properly signifies. I say then that the Philosopher in the second *Of the Soul*, when analysing its powers, says that the soul has in the main three powers, to wit, life, sense and reason ; and he also mentions motion, but this may be united with sense, for every soul that has sense (either with all the senses or some one of them only), [90] has motion also ; so that motion is a power inseparable from sense. And, as he says, it is quite plain that these powers are so related to each other that one is the foundation of the other. And that which is the foundation may exist by itself apart ; but the other, which is founded upon it, may not exist apart from it. Wherefore the vegetative power, whereby things live, is the foundation upon which rests the sensitive life, to wit [100], sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch ; and this vegetative power may constitute a soul in itself, as we see in all the plants. The sensitive power cannot exist without this ; there is nothing that feels, without being alive. And this sensitive power is the foundation of the intellectual power, to wit the reason ; and therefore, amongst mortal things that have life, the rational power without the sensitive is not to be found ; but the sensitive power is to be found [110] without the other, as we see in the beasts and in the birds and in the fishes and in every brute animal. And that



soul which embraces all these powers is the most perfect of all the rest. And the human soul, which is associated with the nobility of the highest power, to wit reason, participates in the divine nature after the fashion of an eternal intelligence; because the soul is so ennobled, and stripped of material, in this sovran power [120], that the divine light shines in it as in an angel; and therefore man has been called by the philosophers the 'divine animal.' In this most noble part of the soul exist many faculties, as says the Philosopher, especially in the sixth of the *Ethics*, where he says that there is a capacity in it which is called the scientific, and another which is called the ratiocinative or counselling; and together with this are certain faculties, as Aristotle says in [130] that same place, such as the inventive faculty and the judicial. And all these most noble faculties, and the rest that abide in this excellent power, are called collectively by this name, as to the meaning of which we were inquiring, to wit 'mind.' Whereby it is manifest that by mind we understand this highest and most noble part of the soul.

And that this is the meaning is seen from the fact [140] that it is only of man and of the divine substances that this 'mind' is predicated; as may be plainly seen from Boethius, who first predicates it of men, when he says to Philosophy: 'Thou, and God who placed thee in the minds of men'; and afterwards predicates it of God when he says to God: 'Thou dost produce all things after a supernal pattern, oh thou most beauteous, bearing the beauteous world in thy mind.' Nor ever was it predicated of a brute

Of animal; [150] nay, rather are there many men  
 mindless men who seem lacking in this most perfect part, of  
 whom it seems that we neither should nor can  
 predicate it; and therefore such are called in  
 grammar *amenti* and *dementi*, that is 'without  
 mind.' So now we can see what is that  
 mind, which is the culmination and the  
 most precious part of the soul, which is deity.  
 And this is the place wherein I declare that love  
 discourseth to me of my lady.

22-23. Compare *Paradiso*, I. 103 ff., especially 139-141.

25. *Substantial form*, i.e., the form in virtue of which any being, or 'substance,' is what it is.

27 ff. *They derive*, i.e., the substantial forms. The work *De Causis* (translated from the Arabic towards the end of the twelfth century) is supposed to be based on a work of the Neoplatonic philosopher, Proclus (410-485 A.D.), and to have been drawn up in the ninth century. It is a work of speculative theology of a metaphysical and pantheistic turn. Its terminology is not identical with that of the Schoolmen, and, except when directly quoting it, Dante translates its ideas into the more familiar language of the schools; and he doubtless read into it a much closer agreement with the theology of the thirteenth century than it really displays. The passage quoted in lines 33-34 runs: '*Et diversificantur bonitates et dona ex concursu recipientis*'—'And the excellences and gifts are varied by the co-operation of the receiver.' It is noteworthy that Dante took the passive *diversificantur* as a deponent, hence the awkwardness of the phrase, there being no subject to the verb *make*.

37. *Alpetragius*. An Arabic astronomer of the twelfth century.

56-64. Compare *Paradiso*, XXVI. 64-66, and II. 1:36, *note*.

102. *Soul*. The word *anima* as used by Dante and the Schoolmen cannot be adequately translated. It represents Aristotle's  $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$ , which means *life*, that is to say, the whole group of vital phenomena which characterise any

living being. A plant, being alive, has *life* of a certain limited range; and a man has life of a wider range, manifesting a greater variety of vital phenomena. But neither in plant, animal nor man does Aristotle regard the  $\psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$  as an entity, capable of existing apart from the living thing. It is in connection with the  $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ , Latin, *intellectus*, Italian *intelletto* or *mente* (which is indeed, in some sort, fused with the human  $\psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$ ), that the question of immortality and separate existence arises. But in their doctrine of the human *anima* the Schoolmen were far from being pure Aristotelians; for the Platonic doctrine of the soul, as a distinct and separable entity, harmonised far better than the teaching of Aristotle with Christian conceptions. This doctrine they endeavoured to read into Aristotle, and therefore the word *anima* sometimes means merely *life* and sometimes *soul*. If we translate it *soul*, and so make Dante speak of a plant having a *soul*, though of a lower order than that of man, the impression produced is quite erroneous, for there was no such animistic conception as this phrase suggests to us, in the minds of the Schoolmen. If, on the other hand, we translate it *life*, it is inadequate whenever the reference is to the immaterial and immortal part in man, which can only be indicated by the 'soul.'

107. *Mortal things that have life.* The angels (who are 'things that have life,' but are not 'mortal') have the rational power without the power of sense. See II. 7, 11 ff.

125. The manuscripts say 'the sixth *Of the Soul*,' whereas there are but three books of the *De Anima*, and nothing accurately corresponding to Dante's references can be found in any of them. Dr. Moore has pointed out that the contrast between the *scientifica* and the *ragionativa* and the identification of the *ragionativa* and *consigliativa* are to be found in the sixth book of the *Ethics*. *Inventiva* does not appear to be an Aristotelian term at all, but it is used by Thomas Aquinas to mean the power which ascertains the facts on which judgment is to be based, and therefore it is a proper contrast to the *judicativa*. I cannot find that Aquinas uses the term in his commentary on this book of the *Ethics*, but the subject-matter of that book is the intellectual virtues, the function of which is to ascertain what is that 'right pro-

portion' wherein virtue consists; and elsewhere Aquinas frequently says that one of them, viz., prudence, is *inventiva medii in virtutibus moralibus*. I am therefore inclined to think that Dante has the sixth book of the *Ethics*, and its subject-matter, in his mind. Dr. Moore and other editors prefer to read 'the third book *Of the Soul*.'

153. *In grammar*, i.e., in Latin.

157. *Deity*, in the sense of divineness. The mind is the part of the soul or life which constitutes its divineness.

### CHAPTER III

[(iii.) Of the kinds and degrees of love and of the supreme love of truth and virtue. Then ( $\alpha$ ) of the unutterableness of this supreme love, because ( $\alpha$ ) it bewilders the intellect and ( $\beta$ ) it baffles the tongue.]

Of **specific** **loves** **iii.** **love** **this** **is**, by telling of the place wherein it operates. Wherefore be it known that everything, as said above, and for the reason above set forth, hath its specific love, as, for example, the simple bodies have a love which has an innate affinity to [10] their proper place; and that is why earth ever drops to the centre; but the love of fire is for the upper circumference, under the heaven of the moon, and therefore it ever riseth thereto.

Primary compound bodies, like the minerals, have a love for the place where their generation is ordained; and therein they grow, and thence draw vigour and power. Whence we see the

magnet ever receive power from the direction of its [20] generation. Plants,  
brutes  
and men

Plants, which are the primary living things, have a more manifest love for certain places, according as their composition requires; and therefore we see certain plants almost always gather along watercourses, and certain on the ridges of mountains, and certain on slopes and at the foot of hills, the which, if we transplant them, either die altogether or live as if in gloom, like things parted [30] from the place dear to them.

As for the brute animals, not only have they a more manifest love for their place, but we see that they love one another.

Men have their proper love for perfect and comely things. And because man (though his whole form be one sole substance) has in himself, by his nobility, something of the nature of each of these things, he may have all these [40] loves, and has them all indeed. For in virtue of the nature of the simple body, which predominates in the subject, he naturally loves to descend; and therefore when he moves his body upward it is more toilsome. By the second nature, of a complex body, he loves the place and further the time of his generation, and therefore everyone is naturally of more efficient body at the place where he was generated, and at the time of his generation, [50] than at any other. Wherefore we read in the stories of Hercules, and in Great Ovid, and in Lucan, and in other poets, that, when he was fighting with the giant called Antæus, whenever the giant failed and his body was stretched upon the earth, whether of

Man's  
complex  
nature

his own will or by the might of Hercules, force and vigour rose up again in him, renovated by the earth, wherein and wherefrom he had been generated. Perceiving which, [60] Hercules, at the last, grasping him and lifting him from the earth, held him so long, and suffered him not to reunite himself with the earth, that with overmastery he conquered and slew him. And this battle was in Africa according to the testimony of the scriptures. And by the third nature, to wit that of plants, man hath love for certain food, not in so far as it affects the sense but in so far as it is nutritious; [70] and such food maketh the working of this nature most perfect; and other food does not so, but makes it imperfect. And therefore we see that some certain food shall make men fair of face and stout of limb, and of a lively colour; and certain other shall work the contrary of this. And in virtue of the fourth nature, that of animals, to wit the sensitive, man hath another love whereby he loveth according to sensible appearance, like to a beast; and this is the love [80] in man which most needeth a ruler, because of its overmastering operation, especially in the delight of taste and touch. And by the fifth and last nature, that is to say the truly human or, rather say, the angelic, to wit the rational, man hath love to truth and to virtue; and from this love springeth the true and perfect friendship, drawn from nobility, whereof the Philosopher speaks in the [90] eighth of the *Ethics*, when he treats of friendship.

Wherefore, inasmuch as this nature is called mind, as shown above, I declared that love dis-

coursed 'in my mind' to give to understand that this love was that which is native to this most noble nature, to wit the love of truth and of virtue, and to exclude every false opinion concerning me, whereby my love might have been suspected to be love [100] for delight of sense. And then I say 'yearningly' to give to understand its continuity and its fervour. And I say *a.* that he often moveth things which make my intellect lose its way; and I speak truth: because *a.* my thoughts, when discoursing of her, often strove to bring things to an issue about her which I might not comprehend; and I was all astray, so that outwardly I appeared as though distraught, like to a man who looks with his sight along a straight line, [110] and first clearly sees the things nighest to him; then, as he goes on, sees them less clearly; then further on is at a loss concerning them; then going on even to the furthest of all, his sight is unfocussed and he sees nought.

And this is the one source of the unutterableness of that which I have taken as my theme. And then, in sequence, I tell of the other, when I say: 'His discourse,' and the rest. And I *β.* say that my thoughts (which are the discourse of love) have such sweet sound [120] that my soul (that is my affection) burns to be able to relate this with the tongue. And because I may not tell it, I say that the soul laments thereat, saying:

*Oh me! that I have not power.*

And this is the other source of unutterableness, namely that the tongue cannot completely follow

The  
ineffable  
theme



Hearing that which the intellect perceives. And I  
and say :  
feeling  
poetry

*The soul that heareth him and feeleth,*

‘heareth’ as touching the words; and ‘feeleth’ as touching the sweetness of the sound.

5-8. The reference is presumably to I. 1 : 4-7.

37. That is to say, man is a single being (substance), and therefore has but one form, although he combines in himself the faculties of all the lower beings. Compare the somewhat analogous passage in *Purgatorio*, XXV. 52-75; and also *Purgatorio*, IV. 1-12, where Dante maintains the doctrine of a single soul, manifesting various groups of vital phenomena.

41, 42. The ‘simple body’ or element in question is earth. But we seem to want ‘in his body’ for ‘in the subject.’

51. *Great Ovid*, i.e., *The Metamorphoses*.

## CHAPTER IV

[(*b*): Of the poet’s insufficiency in (*a*) intellect and (*β*) eloquence, which rests (*c*) on the corresponding insufficiency of the faculties of (*a*) thought and (*β*) speech. Of a certain objection to the author’s apology. And of the cause of the insufficiencies he alleges.]

The author’s insufficiency  
HAVING discoursed of the twofold unutterable-ness of this subject-matter, it is fitting to proceed to tell of my own insufficiency. I say then that my insufficiency hath a twofold origin even as the loftiness of that lady hath a twofold transcendency, after the fashion expounded.

*a.* For, through poverty of intellect, needs must I [10] drop much of that which is true con-



cerning her, and which rays in some sort into and its my mind, which, like a transparent body, receives without arresting it. And this I say in this following clause :

*And verily it behoveth me first to drop.*

Then when I say :

*And of that which it understandeth,*

I assert that not only am I insufficient for that which my intellect cannot support, but even for that which I understand, because my [20] tongue hath not such eloquence as to be able to utter the discourse which is held of her in my  $\beta$ . thought. Whereby it is to be seen that, in proportion to the truth, that which I shall say will be but little, and the outcome of this is greatly to her praise if rightly considered, and that is the main purpose. And that discourse, which at every point has its hand on the main purpose, may well be said to come from the workshop of the rhetorician.

[30] Then where it says :

*Wherefore if defect shall mark my rhymes,*

I excuse myself for my fault, for which, when  $c$ . folk see that my words are beneath her dignity, I ought not to be blamed. And I say that if there be defect in my rhymes, that is to say, in my words, which are ordained to treat of her, the blame must fall upon the weakness of intellect and the scant power of our speech, which is  $a, \beta$ . vanquished by the thought, so that [40] it may scarce follow it, especially where the thought springs from love, because there the soul exercises herself more profoundly than elsewhere.

For  
what men  
should be  
blamed

It might be said, 'Thou art excusing and at the same time accusing thyself,' for it is a conviction of blame and not a purgation from it, in so far as the blame is thrown upon the intellect and upon speech, which are mine, so that if the same be good I ought to be praised therefore to the extent of the goodness, and [50] if defective to be blamed. To this it may be answered briefly that I do not accuse myself, but do genuinely excuse myself. And hereto be it known that, according to the Philosopher in the third of the *Ethics*, man deserves praise or blame only for those things which it is in his power to do or not to do, but in those things wherein he has no power he deserves neither praise nor blame, inasmuch as both are to be rendered [60] to some other, albeit the things themselves be part of the very man. Wherefore we should not blame a man because of a body deformed from his birth, because it was not in his power to make himself beautiful, but we are to blame the faulty disposition of the material whereof he was made, which was the source of the failure of nature. And in like manner we should not praise a man for any beauty of body which he may have [70] from his birth, for he was not the maker thereof; but we ought to praise the artificer, to wit human nature, which produces such great beauty in its material when it is not impeded by it. And therefore the priest well answered the emperor who laughed and scoffed at his deformity of body: 'God is the Lord; he made us, and not we ourselves'; and these are the words of the prophet in a verse of the Psalter, written as they stand [80]

in the priest's answer, without addition or subtraction. And therefore let the ill-conditioned wretches look to it who make it all their study to deck out their person (which should be treated with all dignity), for this is nought else than to ornament the work of another and neglect one's own.

Of things  
unimagin-  
able

Returning then to the purpose, I affirm that *a.* our intellect, by defect of that power whence it draws whatsoever it contemplates (which is an organic power, to wit the fantasy), may [90] not rise to certain things, because the fantasy may not aid it, for it hath not wherewithal. Such are the substances sejunct from matter, which, even though a certain consideration of them be possible, we may not understand nor comprehend perfectly. And for this man is not to blame, for he was not the maker of this deficiency; nay, rather is it the work of universal nature, that is, of God, who willed that we should lack such [100] light in this life; and why he did this it were presumptuous to argue. So that if my consideration transported me into a region where fantasy failed the intellect, I am not to blame for not being able to understand. Further, a limit is fixed for our intelligence in *β.* each one of its operations, not by us but by universal nature; and therefore be it known that the limits of intelligence are wider in [110] thought than in speech, and wider in speech than in signals. Therefore, if our thought surpasses speech, not only in matters which attain not to perfect understanding but also in those which only just attain to it, we are not to blame for this; because it is not we who make it so. And

Of the limits of intellect thus I show that my excuse is a genuine one when I say :

*For this let our feeble intellect be blamed and  
our [120] speech which hath not power to  
tell again all that love telleth.*

For the goodwill should be right clearly seen, and this is what we ought to consider in the matter of human deserts. This, then, is how we are to understand the first chief section of this ode which is in hand.

58-61. Compare *Purgatorio*, XVIII. 59-72. Also *Paradiso*, IV. 58-60.

87-89. *Fantasia* is the power of combining the scattered data of the senses into a connected image, and is shared by the animals. It is an 'organic power'; that is to say, it has an organ in the brain, whereas the 'intellect' has no physical organ. The *fantasia* and other organic powers furnish material upon which the purely spiritual 'intellect' works. Compare *Purgatorio*, XXV. 61-66, and *Paradiso*, IV. 40-42. Aristotle makes a striking remark in proof of the immaterial character of the 'intellect.' He says that whereas the senses, when overwhelmed by excess of the thing that they perceive (light, sound, etc.), are rendered incapable of receiving small impressions, the intellect is rendered keener in the perception of minute truths by the perception of great ones.

## CHAPTER V

[(II.) Of the threefold division of the second section in praise of (*a*) the lady's whole self, (*b*) her soul in especial, and (*c*) her body in especial. But first of the stability of the earth, notwithstanding that certain have questioned it, and of the circling of the sun, in its causes and as affecting the several portions of the earth.]

Now that the discussion of the first section has revealed its meaning, we are duly to proceed to the second. Whereof, for its better inspection, three divisions should be made according as it is embraced in three verses. For in the first I commend this lady in her entirety and without distinction, alike in soul and in body; in the second I come down to the special [10] praise of the soul, and in the third to the special praise of the body. The first division begins:

*The sun seeth not, who circleth all the world;*

the second begins :

*On her descendeth the divine power;*

the third begins :

*Things are revealed in her aspect;*

and these divisions are to be discussed in order.

I say then :

*a.*

*The sun seeth not, who circleth all the world,*

wherein, for perfect understanding, [20] we must know how the world is circled by the sun.

In the first place, I say that by 'the world' I

Of the earth's movement do not here understand the whole body of the universe, but only this region of sea and land, according to the common speech, which uses so to call it; just as one says 'such an one has seen all the world,' meaning the region of sea and land.

Pythagoras and his followers declared [30] that this world was one of the stars, and that there was another, of like fashion, opposite to it; and this they called Antichthon. And he said that they were both on one sphere which turned from east to west, and that it was in virtue of this revolution that the sun circled round us and was now visible and now invisible. And he said that fire was betwixt these two; laying it down that it was a nobler substance than water and than earth, and [40] laying it down that the centre was the noblest amongst the places of the four simple bodies. And therefore he said that fire, when it seemed to rise, was really descending to its own centre.

Afterwards Plato adopted another opinion, and wrote, in a book of his which is called *Timæus*, that the earth, with the sea, was really the centre of the whole, but that its whole globe turned round on its centre, following the primal [50] movement of heaven, but very slowly, because of its gross material, and because of its extreme distance from that primal movement.

These opinions are refuted as false in the second *Of Heaven and Earth* by that glorious philosopher to whom nature opened her secrets more than to any other; and by him it is there shown that this world, to wit the earth, stands for ever stable and fixed in herself. And the

proofs, which Aristotle enunciates to crush [60] or rest these others and to establish the truth, it is not my purpose here to relate; because it is enough for those whom I am addressing to be assured on his great authority that this earth is fixed, and revolves not, and that it, together with the ocean, is the centre of the heaven.

This heaven revolves round this centre, as we perceive, without break; in the revolution of which there must needs be two fixed poles, and a [70] circle, equally distant from them both, which revolves most rapidly. Of these two poles the one, that is to say this northern one, is apparent to almost all the land which is uncovered; the other, to wit the southern one, is concealed from almost all the uncovered land. The circle which is perceived midway between them is that part of the heaven under which the sun revolves when he goes in company with the Ram or with the Scales.

[80] Wherefore be it known that if a stone should fall from this our pole, it would fall, away yonder, into the ocean, right upon the hump of the sea, at the spot where, if there were a man, he would always have the star right above his head. And I suppose that from Rome to this spot, measuring straight to the north, there would be a space of some two thousand seven hundred miles, or a little more or less. Let us imagine, then, for our better understanding, that there be a city [90] on that spot which I have named, and that it be called Maria.

I say further, that if a stone should fall from that other pole, that is the southern one, it



Poles and equator would fall upon that hump of the Ocean-sea which is exactly opposite to Maria on this ball ; and I suppose that from Rome to the place where that second stone would fall, measuring straight to the south, would be a space of seven thousand five hundred miles, a little [100] more or less. And here let us imagine another city and let it be called Lucia, and the space, in whatever direction we draw the cord, would be ten thousand two hundred miles between the one and the other, just half the circumference of this ball, so that citizens of Maria would have their feet opposed to the feet of those of Lucia.

Let us further imagine a circle upon this ball which at every point should be [110] the same distance from Maria as from Lucia. I suppose that this circle (as I understand by the teachings of the astrologers, and by that of Albert of Germany in his book *Of the Nature of Places and of the Properties of the Elements*, and also by the testimony of Lucan in his ninth book) would divide this uncovered land from the Ocean, down there towards the south, almost along the whole extremity of the first climate, [120] where are, amongst other nations, the Garamanti, who are almost always naked ; to whom Cato came with the people of Rome, fleeing the lordship of Cæsar.

When we have marked these three places upon this ball it is easy to perceive how 'the sun circleth' it. I say, then, that the heaven of the sun revolves from west to east, not directly counter to the diurnal movement (that is the movement of day and night), but obliquely [130] against it. So that its mid circle, which



lies symmetrically between its poles, whereon is the body of the sun, cuts the circle of the two first poles at two opposite points, to wit, at the beginning of the Ram and at the beginning of the Scales; and it departs from it along two arcs, one toward the north and the other toward the south. And the summits of these arcs depart equally from the first circle, on either side, by twenty- [140] three degrees and a point more; and one summit is the beginning of the Crab and the other is the beginning of Capricorn. Wherefore, at the beginning of the Ram, when the sun travels beneath the mid circle of the first poles, Maria must needs see him circling the world around, down upon the earth, or the ocean, like a mill-stone, from which not more than half his body should appear; and she would see him continually rising after the manner of the screw of a [150] press, until he had completed ninety-one revolutions and a little more. When these revolutions are completed his elevation at Maria is about as much as it is for us at mid-tierce, when the day and night are equal. And if a man were standing erect in Maria, with his face ever turned to the sun, he would see it ever moving toward his right hand. Then, following the same path, he seems to descend for another ninety-one circlings and a little more until [160] he is circling around, down upon the earth or the sea, not displaying his whole bulk; and then he passes out of sight and Lucia begins to see him, and perceives him mounting and descending around her with as many circles as Maria does. And if a man

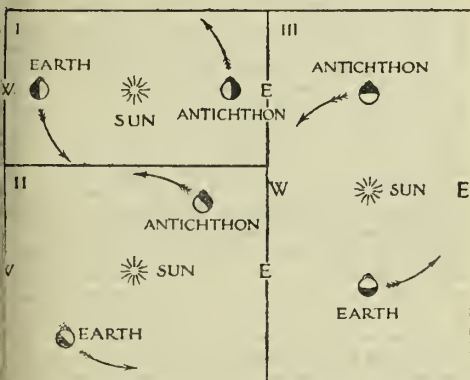
The sun's  
spiral

The millstone and the wheel were standing erect at Lucia and ever turning his face toward the sun, he would see him moving toward his left hand. Whereby it may be perceived that these places have one day in the year, [170] six months long, and a night of equal time; and when the one has day the other has night.

Again it follows that the circle upon this ball where, as already stated, the Garamanti are, must see the sun circling right above it, not after the fashion of a millstone but of a wheel, not more than half of which can be seen in any region, when the sun is travelling under the Ram. And then it perceives him departing from itself and working towards [180] Maria ninety-one days and a little more, and returning towards itself for as many days; and then, when he has come back, he travels beneath the Scales, and again departs and approaches Lucia ninety-one days and a little more, and returns during as many. And this locality, which girds the whole ball, always has the day equal to the night, whichever side of it the sun is travelling; and it has twice in the year a most fierce summer of heat, and two little winters. It follows further that [190] the two spaces intermediate between the two imagined cities and the mid-circle must see the sun in varied fashion according as they are remote or nigh to these places, as may now, by what has been said, be perceived by whosoever hath a noble intellect, to which it is well to leave a little effort. Wherefore it may now be seen that, by divine provision, the world is so ordained that when the sphere of the sun has revolved and returned to [200] any point, this

ball, on which we are placed, has received in Lift up its every region an equal time of light and of your eyes darkness. Oh, unutterable wisdom that didst thus ordain, how poor is our mind to comprehend thee; and ye for whose behoof and delight I am writing, in what blindness do ye live, not lifting up your eyes to these things but keeping them fixed upon the mire of your folly!

29-52. Without going into the historical question of the views of Pythagoras, we can easily see what Dante



understood them to have been. We must note in the first place that it is the daily (not the annual) apparent motion of the sun that is explained by a daily revolution of the earth round him; and in the second place that the supposed revolution of the earth is from east to west, *i. e.*, in the same direction as the apparent motion of the sun. Antichthon, or the counter-earth, is a hypothetical second body, introduced for the sake of symmetry, which is always exactly opposite to the earth on the other side of the sun. The first position marked in the figure shows the sun rising to the centre of the inhabited

hemisphere of the earth, and setting to the corresponding spot on Antichthon. The second position shows the sun some hours above the horizon on earth and some hours below it on Antichthon, and the third position shows midday on earth and midnight on Antichthon. Observe that both earth and Antichthon are uniformly moving counter-clockwise on the paper; and that if you suppose the earth to be stationary, and make the sun move counter-clockwise round it, you will get the apparent motion of the sun. *I.e.*, the supposed motion of the earth is identical in direction with the apparent motion of the sun, not counter to it; in other words it is from east to west.

45-52. Note again that the opinion assigned to Plato is not that the earth revolves from west to east, counter to the apparent motion of the stars, but that she shares in the universal movement from east to west, though owing to her grossness, she moves so slowly that all the heavenly bodies sweep round past her, as she responds more sluggishly than any of them to the primal movement. It will be seen from these considerations how superficial is the criticism which supposes the opinion here attacked by Dante to coincide with those of modern astronomy. Nevertheless it is evidence of complete emancipation from the tyranny of sense impressions to be able to speculate, however crudely, on the possibility of celestial phenomena owing their origin to movements of the earth; and philosophers who could inquire on general principles whether such and such a phenomenon was due to a movement of the earth or a movement of the sun, or whether the earth revolved on her axis, had already taken the decisive step from a provincial to a cosmic point of view.

84. *The star* obviously means the pole star, though there does not seem to be any other instance of such a use.

91-101. It does not appear what special mystic meaning, if any, Dante had in his mind in naming these supposed cities at the north and south poles *Maria* and *Lucia*; but it is interesting to note the direct association of St. Lucy with the Virgin Mary in Dante's deliverance as recorded in the *Comedy*. See *Inferno*, II. 94-102, and *Purgatorio*, IX. 52-57.

113. *Albert of Germany*, generally known as *Albertus Magnus*. He was teacher of *Thomas Aquinas* (1227-1274 A.D.), whom he survived, dying in 1280 A.D.

119. There was a difference of usage amongst mediæval geographers as to the *climata*. *Alfraganus*, *Dante's* usual authority in such matters, makes the first 'climate' begin at a latitude of  $20\frac{1}{2}$  degrees, but others made it begin at the equator; and in this passage *Dante* seems to follow them, and to mean that land extends as far south as the equator, but no further, and that it is almost exactly bounded by the ocean along the whole equatorial line.

122. *The people of Rome*. The Italian *popolo* is here almost equivalent to 'republican government.'

133. *The circle of the two first poles*, i.e., the celestial equator, equi-distant from the two poles.

142-209. There is a little difficulty in the imagery here, though the whole meaning is perfectly plain. The images of the horizontal motion of a millstone and the vertical motion of a wheel must refer not to the body of the sun but to his whole circulation. He circles with the horizontal movement of a millstone when seen from the north or south pole, and with the vertical motion of a wheel when seen from the equator. In the first case only half the body of the sun is seen, in the second case only half the wheel. In line 147 I read *dalla quale* or *della quale*.

144. *Beneath*, because the equator, on the starry sphere, is an immense height above him.

154. The highest elevation of the sun, as seen from the south pole, would be about  $23\frac{1}{2}$  degrees; and as the sun moves through 15 degrees in an hour and at the equinox rises nearly vertically in the early hours, by middle-tierce (half-past seven) he would be nearly  $22\frac{1}{2}$  degrees above the horizon. The measure is not intended to be exact.

167. *Towards his left hand*. Italian *dallo braccio sinistro*. There is a curious ambiguity in the reposition *da* when used of direction. It may mean either *from* or *to*. Here it means *to*. A man standing in *Maria* would see the sun move clockwise, towards his right; one standing in *Lucia* would see him moving counter-clockwise, towards his left. It is

interesting to note that Aristotle who holds that movement naturally starts from the right, regards the facts here insisted on as a proof that the south pole is really the top of the earth, and that it is a local prejudice of ours, contradicting the truth, to think that we are standing right way up and the antipodes wrong way. Perhaps this is why Dante places the earthly Paradise (and therefore Purgatory) in the southern hemisphere, and lays such stress on the direction in which the sun was moving there.

## CHAPTER VI

[(a) The general praise of his lady ( $\alpha$ ) above all else. Of temporal and equal hours. Of the general praise of his lady ( $\beta$ ) in herself, who is the prototype in the mind of God of perfect humanity, and as such is gazed on by the angels who produce the human form. On earth the desire for her is never sated, seeing that none may here reach perfection. God of his free grace gives to her in excess of the due of even perfect humanity, and her soul, so gifted, shining through her body, wakes holy longings in them on whom she shines.]

The author commends his lady

In the preceding chapter it has been shown in what way the sun circles; so that we may now proceed to explain the meaning of the division which we are considering. I say then that in this first division I begin to commend this lady

a. by comparing her with other things. And I say that the sun, circling the world, sees not anything so noble as her; [10] wherefore it follows that she, according to these words, is the most noble of all the things that the sun shines upon. And I say :

*In that hour, and the rest.*

Wherefore be it known that 'hour' is understood in two ways by the astronomers, one by making twenty-four hours of the day and night, to wit twelve of the day and twelve of the night, whether the day be long or short. And these hours are short or long in the day or in the night according as day or night [20] waxes or wanes. And these hours the church uses when she says primes, tierce, sext and nones, and these are called the temporal hours. The other is to make day and night twenty-four hours, of which the day one while has fifteen hours and the night nine, and another while the night sixteen and the day eight, according as day or night waxes or wanes; and these are called equal hours. And ever at the equinox these, and those which [30] are called temporal, are one and the same thing; because the day being equal to the night it must needs so be.

Hours  
and  
offices

Then when I say :

*Every supernal intellect gazes upon her,*

I commend her without reference to aught else,  $\beta$ . and I say that the Intelligences of heaven marvel at her, and that noble folk down here below think of her when they have most of that which is their delight. And here be it known that every [40] supernal intellect, according as it is written in the book *Of Causes*, hath knowledge of that which is above itself, and of that which is below itself. It hath knowledge, then, of God, as its cause; it hath knowledge, then, of that which is beneath it as its effect. And because God is the most universal cause of all things, by



Angels having knowledge of him they have knowledge of all things according to the measure of intelligence. Wherefore all the Intelligences have knowledge of the [50] human form in so far as it is regulated by intention in the divine mind. But the motor Intelligences have highest knowledge of it, because they are the most especial causes of it and of every general form. And they know it as perfectly as can possibly be, even as their rule and example. And if the human form itself, when copied and individuated, is not perfect, the defect is not of the example [60] but of the material, which is individual. Wherefore when I say:

*Every supernal intellect gazes upon her,*

I would say nought else save that she is made as she is, even as the intentional example of the human essence, which is in the divine mind; and made by that power which exists in highest degree in those angelic minds which, with the heavens, fashion these things here below.

And in confirmation of this I go on and [70] say:

*And such folk as are here enamoured,* and the rest,

where you are to know that each thing most chiefly desires its own perfection, wherein its every longing is stilled, and it is for its sake that any other thing is desired. And it is this longing which always makes every delight seem defective to us; for no delight in this life is so great as to be able to take away the thirst



from our soul, so that the longing spoken of <sup>The</sup> shall [80] not remain in our thought. And <sup>wisdom</sup> since this lady is in very truth that perfection, I <sup>of God</sup> affirm of the folk that here below receive the greatest delight, that when they are most at peace she still abides in their thoughts. Whereby I assert that she is as perfect as the human essence can supremely be.

Then when I say :

*Her being is to him who gives it to her so pleasing,*

I show that not only [90] is this lady the most perfect in the human generation, but more than most perfect, in so far as she receives of the divine excellence beyond the due of humanity. Whence we may reasonably believe that as every master loves his best work more than the rest, so God loves the best human person more than all the rest. And since his generosity is not confined by the necessity of any [100] limit, his love hath not regard to the due of him who receiveth it, but surpasses it in the gift and benefaction of power and of grace. Whence I say here that God himself, who gives her being, for love of her perfection, infuses of his excellence into her beyond the limits of the due of our nature.

Then when I say :

*Her pure soul,*

I prove what has been said by the [110] testimony of sense ; where you are to know that, as saith the Philosopher in the second *Of the Soul*, the soul is the actualising of the body ; and if it is its actualising it is its cause ; and (because,

Soul and body as is written in the book *Of Causes* already cited, every cause infuses into its effect some of the excellence which it receives from its own cause) it infuses and renders to its body something of the excellence of its cause, which is God. Wherefore, inasmuch as wondrous things are perceived in her under [120] the bodily aspect, so as to make everyone who looks on her long to behold them, it is manifest that her form, to wit her soul, which guides the body as its proper cause, miraculously receives the gracious excellence of God. And so do I prove, by this her appearance, that beyond the due of our nature (which in her is most perfect as has been said above) this lady has been endowed and [130] ennobled by God. And this is all the literal meaning of the first division of the second main section.

53-55. Here, if I understand him, Dante represents the angels as taking part in the creation of the human soul, which is quite contrary to his mature doctrine as represented in the *Comedy*. Compare *Purgatorio*, XXV. 70-75; *Paradiso*, I. 73-75, and especially *Paradiso*, VII. 139-144.

63-68. The text, as it stands, seems (to me) obscure and hardly translatable.

64. *Intentional*. That is 'existing in the divine mind, as the intention of the Deity.'

80-85. There appears to be some uncertainty in Dante's treatment of this passage of his ode. In III. 13: 21 ff. he expounds it (doubtless in harmony with the original intention) as meaning that it is just when men experience the peace of love that they are most enamoured of philosophy; but here, taking advantage of the ambiguity of the word *ancora*, he seems to expound it as meaning that, even when most at peace, souls have *still* an unsatisfied longing for wisdom. So that, in the one case he represents their yearning towards wisdom as being there in consequence of their peace, and in the other in spite of it.

88-107. Throughout this whole section of the commentary there appears to be a certain inconsistency of treatment. The lady of Dante's love is primarily the divine wisdom, secondarily the wisdom of angels and of men, and derivatively the concrete knowledge (sciences) which form the body or content of human wisdom. So far there is a satisfactory unity of conception; but the personification of Philosophy in the ode necessitates the treatment of her as an ideal human personality, of perfect grace and beauty, which brings us onto quite another plane; and, further, the reaction of these two conceptions upon each other produces a third, namely that of the divine prototype of humanity as existing in the divine mind, the Platonic *idea* of man, or the divine intention with respect to man. Thus the subject-matter of the ode becomes a wavering conception which is sometimes focussed as the Second Person of the Trinity (compare III. 14: 63 ff., 15: 182-184), sometimes as one of the varying degrees of abstract wisdom, sometimes as concrete knowledge, sometimes as ideal humanity, and sometimes as an ideal and perfect human being. The student of the *Comedy* will note the much firmer and more consistent handling of the several aspects in the conception of Beatrice (towards which Dante is here feeling his way, though in the person of her supposed rival); and he will further notice the perfect harmony with which the corresponding aspects of the conception of Virgil are united in the presentation of his personality.

112. *The soul is the actualising of the body.* Compare II. 14: 26, *note*, and III. 11: 54, *note*. The body is only potentially a human body unless animated by a human soul, or life, which actualises its potentialities.

124. The soul is the *form* of man, his body is 'that which she guides.'

## CHAPTER VII

[(b) Of the praise of his lady's soul, (a) in itself and (β) in its working upon others. (α) Of degrees of illumination, and of the supreme illumination of his lady. How the same may be discerned. (β) How her excellence may (i.) teach nobleness to other ladies, and may (ii.) confirm the faith of all such as doubt.]

Praise of his lady's soul AFTER commending this lady generally, with reference both to the soul and to the body, I go on to commend her specially with reference to the soul. And first I commend her according as her excellence is great in herself; then I commend her according as her excellence is great upon others and useful to the world. And this second division begins where I say :

*Of her it may be said.*

a. [10] I say, then, first :

*On her descendeth the divine power.*

Where be it known that the divine excellence descends upon all things, and otherwise they could not exist; but although this goodness springs from the most simple principle, it is diversely received, in greater or smaller measure, by the things that receive it. Wherefore it is written in the book *Of Causes* : 'The primal excellence makes its excellences flow upon things with one flowing'; [20] but each thing receives of this flowing according to the fashion of its power and of its being, and of this we may have an example patent to the senses from the sun. We see the light of the sun, which is one,

derived from a single source, diversely received by the several bodies; as Albertus says in that book he has made *On the intellect*, that certain substances, because they have large measure of the clearness of the transparent mingled in their composition, so soon as the sun [30] sees them become so luminous that their aspect consists in the multiplication of the light in them, and they cast a great splendour from themselves upon other substances; as are gold and certain stones. Certain there are which, because they are altogether diaphanous, not only receive the light, but without impeding it render it again, coloured with their colour, to other things. And certain there are so supreme in the purity of their [40] transparency as to become so radiant that they vanquish the temper of the eye, and cannot be looked on without trouble of the sight; as are mirrors. Certain others are so completely without transparency that they receive but little of the light; as is earth. In like manner the excellence of God is received after one fashion by the sejunct substances, to wit the angels, which are without grossness of material, as though diaphanous, in virtue of the purity of their [50] form; and after another fashion by the human soul, which, although on one side it is free from material on another side is impeded (like a man who is immersed in the water all except his head, of whom it cannot be said that he is all in the water or all out of it); and after another fashion by animals whose soul is entirely embraced in material, but I speak of it in the measure to which it is ennobled; and after another fashion by the minerals; and by the earth, [60] other-

Of lumin-  
osity

No wise than by the other elements; because it is the most material, and therefore the most remote and most out of proportion to the prime, most simple, and most noble power, which alone is intellectual, to wit, God.

gaps in  
nature

And though here it is the general degrees that are laid down, nevertheless individual degrees may also be laid down, inasmuch as, of human souls, one receiveth otherwise than another. And because in the [70] intellectual order of the universe the ascent and descent is by almost continuous steps, from the lowest form to the highest and from the highest to the lowest (as we see is the case in the sensible order), and between the angelic nature, which is an intellectual thing, and the human soul there is no intermediate step, but the one is, as it were, continuous with the other in the order of steps; and between the human soul and the most perfect soul of the brute animals there is [80] also no intermediary, and we see many men so vile and of such base condition as scarce to seem other than beasts; in like manner we are to lay it down, and firmly to believe, that there be some so noble and of so lofty condition as to be scarce other than angels; otherwise the human species would not be continued in either direction, which may not be. Such as these Aristotle, in the seventh of the *Ethics*, calls [90] divine, and such I assert this lady to be; so that the divine virtue descends upon her, after the fashion wherein it descends upon an angel.

Then when I say :

*And whatsoever gentle lady not believeth this,*

I prove it by the experience which may be had Of speech of her in those doings which are proper to the rational soul, wherein the divine light most freely rays; that is to say, in speech and in expression, which we are wont to call [100] gestures and bearing.

Whence you are to know that man alone amongst the animals speaks and has gestures and expression which we call rational, because he alone has reason in him. And if anyone should say in contradiction that certain birds talk, as seems to be the case with some, especially the magpie and the parrot, and that certain beasts have expression or gestures, as the ape and some others seem to have, I answer [110] that it is not true that they speak, nor that they have gestures, because they have no reason, from which these things must needs proceed; nor have they the principle of these things within them, nor do they understand what it is; nor do they purpose to signify anything by them, but they merely reproduce what they see and hear. Wherefore, even as the image of bodies is reproduced by certain shining things (for instance, a mirror), [120] and the corporeal image that the mirror displays is not real, so the semblance of reason, namely the expression and the speech which the brute beast reproduces or displays, is not real.

I say that

β.

*Whatsoever gentle lady not believeth*

what I assert, is to

*Go with her and mark well her gestures.*

I say not 'whatsoever man,' because the ex-



Profitable to eternal life perience may be gained in more comely fashion by woman than by man. And I tell that [130] which will be perceived concerning her, in her company, by telling the effect of her speech and the effect of her bearing. For her speech, by its loftiness and by its sweetness, begets in the mind of him who hears it a thought of love (which I call a celestial spirit, because its origin is from above, and from above cometh her teaching, as hath been told already), from which said thought proceeds the firm belief that she is [140] a miraculous lady of power. And her gestures, by their sweetness and their harmony, make love wake and come to consciousness, wherever his potentiality has been sown by a sound nature. Which natural sowing comes about as is set forth in the following treatise.

And when I say,

*Of her it may be said, and the rest,*

I purpose to narrate how the excellence and power of her soul is good and profitable to others; and, i. first, how it is profitable to other [150] ladies; saying:

*Gentle is that in lady which in her is found,*

where I render a manifest example to women, gazing upon which they may, by following it, ii. make a gentle semblance. Secondly, I tell how she is profitable to all folk, saying that her aspect aideth our faith, which is profitable more than all other things to the human race, as that whereby we escape from [160] eternal death and acquire eternal life. And it helps our faith because, inasmuch as the chiefest foundation of our faith



is the miracles wrought by him who was crucified (which same created our reason and willed that it should be inferior to his power), and wrought afterwards in his name by his saints, and inasmuch as many are so stubborn as to doubt of these same miracles, because of some certain mist, who may not believe [170] any miracle except they have visible experience of the same; and inasmuch as this lady is a thing visibly miraculous, whereof the eyes of men may take daily experience, and which may assure us of the possibility of the others, it is manifest that this lady, with her wondrous aspect, 'aideth our faith.' And therefore finally I say that 'from eternity'—that is to say, eternally—she was ordained in the mind of God in testimony of the [180] faith to those who live in these times. And this ends the second division of the second chief section according to its literal meaning.

Aids to  
faith

50. Angels are pure form. Compare *Paradiso*, XXIX. 22-36.

51 ff. Compare *Purgatorio*, XVIII. 49 f., and *note*.

58. *But I speak of it*, etc., *i.e.*, but I speak in each case of the degree (whatever it may be) in which the nobility of these creatures enables them to receive of the divine excellences spoken of in line 46.

69-88. Compare IV. 19: 52-56.

104-124. Compare *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, I. 2: 43-65.

137-138. Presumably the reference is to the declaration in *Ode* I. 13 and in II. 7: 88-100, that the spirit who discoursed of Dante's second love came upon the rays of the star.

145. See IV. 21: 1-48.

168. Some mist of confusion and uncertainty that rises up between them and the object that demands their faith.

## CHAPTER VIII

[(c) Of the body as the instrument of the soul. Of the foretaste of heavenly bliss that may be drawn from looking upon the bodily semblance of his lady, and especially in her eyes and in her smile, wherein her soul as it were flits and flashes, and the adornments of which are placed there by special act of love in obedience to his universal principle of guiding all things to the place where they belong. The author excuses himself for his scant speech of what (i.) transcends and (ii.) bewilders his intellect; and since we may not treat of such things in themselves he discourses somewhat of their marvellous effect, transforming vice to virtue, as was purposed by God himself.]

Three AMONGST the effects of the divine wisdom man is the most marvellous, seeing how the divine nature power has united three natures in one form, and in man how subtly his body must be harmonised for such a form, having organs for almost all its powers. Wherefore, because of the complex harmony amongst so many organs which is required to make them perfectly answer to one another, few of all the great number [10] of men are perfect. And if this creature be so marvellous, verily we must fear to treat of the conditions of the same, not only in words but even in thought, according to those words of *Ecclesiasticus*: 'The wisdom of God, preceding all things, who hath searched out?' and those others where it saith: 'Seek not out things that are too high for thee, and search not out things too hard for thee, but whatsoever things God hath commanded, think thereupon; and in his further [20] works be not curious,' that is

anxious. I, then, who in this third section purpose to speak of certain conditions of such a being (in so far as in her body, by reason of the excellence of her soul, sensible beauty appeareth) timorously, and with no hardihood, purpose to begin to untie so great a knot, if not entirely yet at least in some measure.

Praise of  
his lady's  
person

I say, then, that after revealing the meaning of this section, wherein [30] this lady is commended under the aspect of her soul, we are to proceed, and are to consider how I commend her under the aspect of the body, when I say :

*Things are revealed in her aspect.*

And I say that in her aspect things appear which reveal of the pleasures (amongst the rest) of Paradise. The most noble thing, and that which is written down as the goal of all others, is to be satisfied, and this is being blessed ; and [40] this pleasure is verily (although in another way) in her aspect ; for, by gazing upon her, folk are satisfied (so sweetly doth her beauty feed the eyes of those who look upon her), but in another fashion than by the satisfaction of Paradise, which is unbroken ; for this may not come to any.

And since some might ask where this wondrous pleasure [50] appears in her, I distinguish in her person two parts wherein human pleasure and displeasure are most apparent. Wherefore you are to know that in whatsoever part the soul doth most of her office, this she most fixedly purposes to adorn, and worketh most subtly upon it. Whence we see that in the face of man, wherein she doth more of her office

Eyes and smile than in any other external part, she designeth so subtly [60] that, by reason of her refining there to the utmost capacity of her material, no one face is like to any other; because the distinguishing potentiality of the matter, which is, in a way, unlike in every individual, is here reduced to actuality. And inasmuch as the soul operates in the face chiefly in two places, because in these two places the three natures of the soul have some kind of jurisdiction, to wit in the eyes and in the mouth, it chiefly [70] adorns these, and there sets its whole purpose of beautifying, if it may. And in these two places I  
 a, β. say that these pleasures appear, saying :

*In her eyes and in her sweet smile.*

Which two places by a beautiful simile may be called the balconies of the lady who dwelleth in the edifice of the body, to wit the soul, because here, albeit in a measure veiled, she doth many times reveal herself.

a. [80] She revealeth herself in the eyes so manifestly that her present emotion may be recognised by whoso closely looketh there. Wherefore, since there are six emotions proper to the human soul, whereof the Philosopher makes mention in his *Rhetoric*, to wit, grace, jealousy, pity, envy, love and shame, by none of these may the soul be impassioned without the semblance thereof appearing at the window of the eyes, unless it be [90] shut within by great exertion of power. Whence ere now certain have plucked out their eyes lest their inward shame should outwardly appear, as Statius the poet tells of the Theban Œdipus when he says

that 'with eternal night he solved his convicted shame.' Of seemly  
laughter

It is revealed in the mouth, like a colour  $\beta$ . behind glass. And what is laughter save a coruscation of the delight of the soul, that is to say, a light appearing outwardly [100] according as it exists within? And therefore it is fitting that a man, in order to show his soul moderate in merriment, should laugh in moderation, with a dignified severity, and with slight movement of his features; so that the lady who is then revealed, as said above, may appear modest and not dissolute. Wherefore the book *Of the Four Cardinal Virtues* bids us observe this: 'Let thy laughter be without cachinnation,' that is to say, without cackling like [110] a hen. Ah! wondrous laughter of my lady, whereof I speak, which was never yet perceived save by the eye!

And I say that love conveys these things to her there as to their proper place. And here love may be considered in two ways. Firstly the special love of the soul for these places; and secondly the universal love which disposes things to love and to be loved, and which ordains the soul [120] to adorn these parts.

Then when I say :

*They transcend our intellect,*

plead my excuse for seeming to utter but little (when I dwell upon it) of so great excellence of beauty; and I affirm that I say so little of it for two reasons. The one is that the things which appear in her aspect 'transcend our intellect,' to wit the intellect of man; and I

The baffled intellect tell the manner of this transcending, which is after the fashion wherein [130] the sun transcends feeble vision, not only that wherein he transcends the sound and strong. The other is that the said intellect may not fixedly gaze on it, because the mind becomes intoxicated there, so that straightway after gazing it goes astray in all its activities.

Then when I say :

*Her beauty rains down flamelets of fire,*

I have recourse to treating of its effect, since it is impossible to treat completely of itself. Wherefore you are to know that all [140] those things that overcome our intellect, so that it cannot see what they are, are most suitably treated in their effects. Whence, treating thus of God, and of his sejunct substances, and of first matter, we may have a certain knowledge. And therefore I say that

*Her beauty rains down flamelets of fire,*

to wit the ardour of love and of charity, ensouled by a gentle spirit, that is to say the ardour informed by a gentle [150] spirit, to wit right appetite, by the which and from the which springs the beginning of good thoughts. And it not only makes this but it unmakes and destroys its opposite, to wit the innate vices which are chief foes to good thoughts.

And here we are to know that there are certain of the vices in a man whereto he is naturally disposed, as, for instance, some men in virtue of a choleric complexion are disposed to

anger; and [160] such vices are in-born or co-natural. Others are vices of habit for which not complexion but habit is to blame; for instance intemperance, especially in wine. And these vices are to be escaped and overcome by good habit, whereby a man so becomes virtuous that his moderation needs no effort, as saith the Philosopher in the second of the *Ethics*. But there is this difference [170] between co-natural passions and those of habit, that those of habit disappear entirely on the strength of good habit, because their source, to wit the bad habit, is destroyed by its opposite; but the co-natural ones, the source of which is in the nature of him who experiences the passion, though they may be much lightened by good habit, never entirely disappear so far as their first movement is concerned, but do completely [180] disappear so far as their enduring is concerned; because habit is not an equipoise to the nature wherein is their source. And therefore that man deserves more praise who, though of bad natural disposition, corrects and rules himself contrary to the impulse of his nature, than he who being good by natural disposition retains himself in good conduct or recovers the way when he has lost it; just as it is worthy of more praise to manage an intractable horse than another which is not vicious. I say then that [190] these flamelets which rain from her beauty, as has been said, shatter the innate, that is the co-natural vices, to give to understand that her beauty has power to make a new nature in those who gaze upon it, which is a miraculous thing. And this confirms what is said above in the

Of inborn  
vices



God-given example next preceding chapter when I say that she is the supporter of our faith. Finally when I say :

*Whatsoever [200] lady heareth her beauty;*

under colour of an admonition I draw a conclusion as to the end whereto so great beauty was made. And I say that whatever lady hears her beauty blamed for defect is to gaze upon this most perfect example ; wherein it is to be understood that this said example was made not only to improve the good but also to make a good thing out of an evil one.

And it adds in fine :

*Of her was he thinking who set the universe in motion,*

that is God, to give to [210] understand that nature produced such an effect by divine determination. And thus ends all the second main section of this ode.

3, 4. *Three natures in one form.* I.e., three groups of vital phenomena (the vegetative, the animal, and the rational), in one soul. The rational soul (which is the 'form' of man) draws into itself all the other vital functions. See *Purgatorio*, XXV. 70-75.

39. On the conception of satisfaction as distinct from satiety, see the *Paradiso* generally, and especially XXIV. 1-3 and XXXI. 17, with the *argument*. The passage that follows, up to line 47, is somewhat blurred, since Dante wishes on the one hand to insist on the superlative quality of the joy of union with Philosophy, and on the other hand to guard against appearing to maintain that consummate bliss is attainable on earth. Compare IV. 22 : 205, *note*.

62. The matter out of which one human body is made coincides in most of its capacities or potentialities with that out of which another is made ; but it has



certain special capacities of its own, and in fashioning the face nature avails herself of these to the uttermost.

68. In the eyes and mouth the ordinary nutritive processes of the body at large are operative as elsewhere; they are also sense organs of sight and taste; and, further, they are organs of expression of the intellectual and spiritual life, and consequently all the three divisions of life—vegetative, animal and rational—work upon them.

90. Compare *Purgatorio*, XXI. 103-111.

94-95. *Thebais*, I. 47, *Merseerat aeterna damnatum nocte pudorem*. = 'He had hidden away his shame, sentenced to eternal night.' Once again Dante has mistranslated.

108. The book on the *Four Cardinal Virtues*, generally attributed to Seneca in the middle ages (compare *De Monarchia*, II. 5 : 24), was composed by the Spanish bishop, Martinus Dumensis, in the sixth century (Toynbee).

115-120. With this distinction between universal and special love compare the distinction between universal and particular nature in I. 7 : 53-58, text and note.

137 ff. I take *suo* and *lei* to refer to *beltà*.

150. *Right appetite*. Compare IV. 22 : 31 ff.

181. Dr. Moore would strike out the *non* of the MSS., but this, I think, would give a looser sense.

185. Compare *Purgatorio*, XVI. 73-81.

## CHAPTER IX

[(III.) The author, defending his ode from the seeming contradiction of a certain ballad of his, states that seeming contradiction, explains it, and exhorts his ode how to act. (a) Of the accusations of scorn that the ballad makes against this lady. (b) Of delusive appearances and of forms of speech based thereon. The explanation, by an analogy, of the accusation of the ballad.]

THE arrangement of the present treatise requires (now that two parts of this ode have first been explained according to my intention) that we proceed to the third, wherein I intend to clear

An  
explanation

The sister the ode of an accusation that might have told  
 ballad against her. It is this, that before I came to  
 III. compose this ode, thinking that this lady [10]  
 had become somewhat stern and haughty towards  
 me, I made a little ballad wherein I called this  
 lady proud and pitiless, which appears contrary  
 to what is said of her here above. And there-  
 fore I turn to the ode, and under colour of  
 teaching her how she must excuse herself,  
 I excuse her. And this is a figure (when  
 inanimate things are addressed) which is called  
 by the rhetoricians *prosopopæia*, and [20] the  
 poets very frequently employ it.

*Ode it seemeth that thy speech is counter,*  
 and the rest.

Now the better to give the meaning of this to be  
 understood I must divide it into three sections,  
 for in the first is set forth the thing which  
 a, b, c. needs excusing; then the excuse is proceeded  
 with when I say:

*Thou knowest that the heaven;*

finally I address the ode as a person instructed  
 as to what is to be done, when I say:

*Thus [30] plead thy excuse if thou have need.*

a. So I say first: 'Thou ode, who dost speak of  
 this lady with so much praise, it seems that thou  
 art contrary to a sister of thine.' I say 'sister'  
 by similitude, for as a woman begotten by the  
 same begetter is called sister, so may a man  
 call a work that is done by the same doer a  
 sister; for our doing [40] is in a kind of way  
 begetting. And I say why she seems counter

to the other, saying: 'Thou makest her humble and the other made her proud,' that is to say, haughty and disdainful, which is the same thing. Common  
sensibles

Having set forth this accusation I go on to the excuse, by means of an analogous instance, wherein sometimes the truth is at discord with the appearance, and, under sundry aspects, may be differently spoken of. I say:

*Thou knowest that the heaven is ever shining and clear,*

that is to say, it never loses its brightness; but for [50] certain reasons it is sometimes permissible to speak of it as being darkened. Where be it known that the proper objects of sight are colour and light, as Aristotle has it in the second *Of the Soul* and in the book *Of Sense and its Object*. It is true that other things are visible, but they are not the proper objects of sight, because some other sense perceives them, so that they cannot be called proper to sight, nor proper to touch; and such are shape, [60] size, number, movement, rest, which we call 'sensibles,' and which we perceive with more than one sense. But colour and light are properly visible, because we apprehend them by sight alone, that is to say, with no other sense. These visible things, both proper and common, in so far as they are visible, pass into the eye, (I do not mean the things themselves, but their forms) through the diaphanous medium [70] (not in reality but in intention), much as in transparent glass. And in the water which is in the pupil of the eye this passage which the visible form makes through the medium is completed,

Of vision because this water is bounded, something like a mirror, which is glass with lead behind it; so it cannot pass any further on, but is arrested there after the fashion of a smitten ball. So that the form (which does not appear nor [80] shine in the transparent medium) is arrested; and this is why an image is seen on leaded glass but not on other. From this pupil the visual spirit, which extends continuously from it to the front part of the brain (where the sensitive power exists as in its fontal principle) instantaneously, without any interval of time, makes a representation of it; and thus we see. Wherefore, in order that its vision may be true, that is to say such as the visible thing is in itself, [90] the medium through which the form comes to the eye must be colourless, and so must the water of the pupil be; otherwise the visible form would be tainted with the colour of the medium and with that of the pupil. And therefore they who desire to give some particular colour to the things in a mirror, interpose of that colour between the glass and the lead, so that the glass is embraced by it. It is true that [100] Plato and other philosophers declared that our seeing was not due to the visible coming into our eye, but to the visual power going out to the visible. And this opinion is refuted as false by the Philosopher in that *Of Sense and its Object*.

Now that we have thus examined the mode of vision it is easy to perceive that although the star is always equally clear and shining and experiences no mutation [110] save that of local movement, as is proved in that of *Heaven and Earth*, there may be many causes why it

seems not clear and not shining, since it may so appear because of the medium which is continually changing. This medium changes from abundance to paucity of light, as at the presence or absence of the sun; and in his presence the medium, which is diaphanous, is so full of light that it overcomes the star and so seems to be [120] brighter than it. This medium also changes from subtle to gross, and from dry to moist, by reason of the vapours of earth which are continually rising. Which medium, by these changes, changes the image of the star which comes through it, its grossness affecting it in dimness, and its moisture or dryness affecting it in colour.

Appear-  
ance and  
reality

And it may also appear so by reason of the visual organ, that is the eye, which [130] by reason of weakness or exhaustion may acquire a certain colour or a certain feebleness, as it often happens that the tunic of the pupil becoming violently blood-shot because of some disorder caused by illness, almost everything looks red, and therefore the star seems coloured thereby. And, when the sight is enfeebled, a certain dispersion of the spirit takes place in it, so that things no longer seem knit together, but sprawling, [140] much as letters of our writing do on damp paper. And this is why many, when they have a mind to read, remove the writing to a distance from their eyes that the image may enter the more lightly and subtly; and thereby the letter remains more distinct in their sight. And so the star too may seem blurred. And I experienced this in that same year wherein this ode was born; for [150] greatly taxing my

Restoration of vision sight in eagerness of reading, I so weakened the visual spirits that all the stars appeared to me to be shadowed by a kind of halo. And by long repose in dark and cool places, and cooling the body of the eye in clear water, I knit together again the disintegrated power, so as to return to my former good condition of sight. And thus we see that there are many causes (for the reasons noted) why the star may appear other than it really is.

II ff. The 'little sister' here referred to is obviously the ballad, *Voi che sapete ragionar d'amore*, of which a translation is here subjoined :

Ye who have knowledge to discourse of love,            hear-  
ken to my piteous ballad,            which tells of a disdainful  
lady,            who by her worth hath reft away my  
heart.            [4]

So doth she scorn whoever looketh on her,            she  
maketh him bow down his eyes in terror;            for  
round her own there ever whirleth            a picture of  
all cruelty :            but within they bear the sweet  
image,            which makes a gentle soul cry out for  
mercy;            of such virtuous power that whenso she is  
seen,            she draweth sighs from out of the heart of  
folk.            [12]

It seems as though she said : 'Nought humble will I  
be            toward anyone who gazeth in my eyes;            for  
I bear within that gentle lord,            who hath made me  
feel of his darts.'\*            And verily I believe that thus  
she guardeth them            to look herself upon them when  
it pleaseth her :            in fashion as right-minded lady  
doth            (when she is gazed on) through her will for  
honour. †            [20]

I have no hope that ever of her pity            she should  
deign to gaze a little on another :            so cruel a lady

\* She has felt the flame of love herself; and, knowing that she is not invincible, stands upon her guard and will not surrender at a word.

† That is to say, 'for honour's sake a right-minded lady, when gazed upon, guards her looks.'

is she in her beauty she who feeleth love within  
 her eyes. But let her hide and guard him as  
 she will, that I may never see so great salva-  
 tion, yet power shall my longings have against  
 the scorn that love doth wreak upon me. [28]

The poem is one of philosophic love. Compare  
 Matthew Arnold's *Urania* :

I too have suffered ; yet I know  
 She is not cold, though she seems so.  
 She is not cold, she is not light ;  
 But our ignoble souls lack might.

She smiles and smiles, and will not sigh,  
 While we for hopeless passion die ;  
 Yet she could love, those eyes declare,  
 Were but men nobler than they are.

Etc.

45 ff. *wherein sometimes*, etc. The Italian is a little  
 difficult : *nel quale alcuna volta la verità si discorda dall'  
 apparenza, ed altra per diverso rispetto si può trattare*. If  
 it will bear the meaning I have given it, 'the truth may  
 differ from the appearance, and may therefore, under one  
 aspect or another, justify a representation at variance  
 with the appearance,' the sense seems fairly satisfactory.

61. Moore would read, *sensibili comuni* = 'common  
 sensibles.' See IV. 8 : 49, *note*.

69. *Form* is not here used in its technical philosophical  
 sense, but stands simply for 'shape' or 'appearance.'  
 The technical word for the idolon, image, or material  
 counterpart, of an object of sense, which passes into the  
 mind, is *intenzione* (compare *intenzionalmente* in the next  
 line), which is expressly to be distinguished from the  
*forma* or 'essence' of the thing. Compare *Purgatorio*,  
 XVIII. 22, 23, *note*.

74. *Is completed*, that is to say it completes its course  
 'in the water,' because it does not extend beyond it, being  
 arrested at its limit.

101. *The visible*, i.e., colour, not of course the material  
 'thing seen' itself.

119 f. *e però pare più lucente*. So the MSS. Dr.  
 Moore inserts a *non*. The sense would then be : 'And  
 therefore it [the star] no longer seems to shine.' This  
 is certainly more natural.



## CHAPTER X

[How the intensity of the author's passion, when he wrote the ballad, concealed the truth of his lady's disposition from him and made him judge after her semblance. Of a certain point to be discussed hereafter. (c) The author instructs his ode; and thereby instructs his reader in discretion and tact in the matter of conveying instruction, reproof, and laudation.]

Of per-  
turb-  
ing  
passion

QUITTING this digression, which was necessary for the apprehension of the truth, I return to the matter in hand, and declare that as sometimes 'our eyes call,' that is judge, 'the star' other than its real state is, so this little ballad considered this lady according to the appearance (discordant with the truth) that sprang from the infirmity of my mind which was impassioned [10] by excessive longing. And this I make clear when I say: 'For the soul was in such terror, that methought dire' that which I saw in her presence; where be it known that the more closely the agent is united with the patient, so much the stronger is the passion, as may be understood by the opinion of the Philosopher in that *Of Generation*. Wherefore the nearer the desired thing approaches to him who desires it, the greater is the desire; and [20] the more the soul is impassioned the more does it concentrate itself upon the appetitive part, and the more does it retreat from reason: so that, in such state, a person does not judge as a man, but pretty nearly as some other animal, according to appearance only, not according to truth. And this is why the semblance, which in truth was august,



seemed to me 'disdainful and cruel'; and it was in accordance with this judgment of sense that this little ballad spoke. And hereby it is given sufficiently to be understood that this [30] ode considers this lady according to the truth, because of its discord with that other.

Eyes not  
to be  
escaped

And not without reason do I say :

*Where she perceiveth me,*

and not 'where I perceive her.' But herein I would give to understand the great power that her eyes had over me, for even as though I had been diaphanous, their ray passed through me on every side. And here natural and supernatural reasons might be [40] assigned, but let it suffice here to have said so much; elsewhere I shall discourse of it on more fitting occasion.

Then when I say :

c.

*Thus plead thy excuse if thou have need,*

I enjoin upon the ode how to excuse itself (by the reasons assigned), where there is need, to wit where any is in difficulty because of this contradiction; which is no other than to say that if any is in difficulty as concerns the contradiction between this ode and that little ballad he is to consider the reason [50] which has been told. And this figure in rhetoric is worthy of much praise, and moreover is necessary; I mean when words are addressed to one person and intended for another; for admonition is ever laudable and necessary, yet it is not always suitable in every one's mouth. Wherefore when a child is aware of a father's vice, and when a servant is conscious of a master's vice, and when a friend [60] knows

Of admonition and of praise that his friend's shame would be increased or his honour depressed were he to admonish him, or knows that his friend is not patient but irritable under admonition, this figure is most beautiful and most profitable, and it may be called *disguising*. And it resembles the action of the skilful warrior who attacks the fortress on one side to withdraw the defence from the other, for then the intention of the succour goes not to the [70] same quarter as the battle.

And I enjoin upon her also, to ask leave from this lady to speak of her. Where it may be understood that a man should not presume to praise another without rightly considering whether such is the pleasure of the person praised; for many a time he who thinks he is praising is in truth blaming, either through the fault of himself, who speaks the praise, or of him who hears it. Whence there is need of [80] much discretion herein, which discretion is a kind of asking leave, after the fashion wherein I bid this ode ask it. And so ends all the literal meaning of this treatise; wherefore the arrangement of the work demands that, following up the truth, we proceed to the allegorical exposition.

13-25. On *agent* and *patient*. See II. 10 : 67 ff. *note*, and on the concentration of the whole soul upon one power, or one set of powers, compare *Purgatorio*, IV. 1-12.

41. As the portion of the work in which this promise was to be redeemed was never written, we are left to our own resources in elaborating the idea. Probably *Ode* VI. 14, 15, in the seventh treatise (see IV. 26 : 67), would have been the text; or possibly *Ode* VII. 21-24.

## CHAPTER XI

[Of the allegorical interpretation of the ode. And first of philosophy or love of wisdom. Of false and true friendship and love. Of the soul and body of love. Of the secondary sense in which the sciences are called philosophy.]

ACCORDING as the order requires, returning again to the beginning, I declare that this lady is that lady of the intellect which is called philosophy. But inasmuch as praises naturally produce a longing to know the person praised, and since knowing a thing means understanding what it is, considered in itself and in all its causes (as saith the Philosopher in the beginning of the [10] *Physics*), and inasmuch as the name does not expound this (although this is what it signifies, as the Philosopher says in the fourth of the *Metaphysics*, where it is asserted that the definition is that conception which the name signifies) it is fitting at this point, before proceeding further in her praises, to show and to declare what it is that is called philosophy, that is to say, what this name signifies. And afterwards, when she herself has been explained, the present allegory will be more effectively treated. And first [20] I will tell who first gave this name, and then I will proceed to its meaning.

Of definitions

I say then, that of old, in Italy, almost at the beginning of the foundation of Rome, which (as Paulus Orosius writes) was six hundred and fifty years, or a little more or less, before the Saviour came, about in the time of Numa Pompilius, second King of the Romans, there lived a most noble philosopher who was called

Of philo- [30] Pythagoras. And that this was the time  
sophy when he lived Titus Livius seems incidentally to indicate in the first part of his volume. And before him the followers after knowledge were not called philosophers but sages, as were those seven most ancient sages whose fame folk still preserve, the first of whom was Solon, the second Chilo, the third Periander, the fourth Thales, the [40] fifth Cleobulus, the sixth Bias, the seventh Pittacus. This Pythagoras, when asked whether he regarded himself as a sage, refused to appropriate the word to himself, and said that he was not a wise man, but a lover of wisdom. And hence it afterwards came about that everyone who was devoted to wisdom was called a 'lover of wisdom,' that is a philosopher, for in Greek *philos* is as much as *amator* in Latin, and hence we say *philos* for *lover* and *sophia* [50] for *wisdom*; wherefore *philos* and *sophia* are as much as to say 'lover of wisdom'; wherefore it may be noted that it is a name not of arrogance but of humility. Hence is derived the word for the proper act of such an one, *philosophy*; as from 'friend' is derived a word for the proper act of such, *friendship*. Whence may be seen, by considering the significance of the first and the second word, that 'philosophy' is no other than 'friendship to wisdom' [60] or to knowledge; whence in a certain sense everyone may be called a philosopher, in virtue of the natural love which begets in everyone the longing to know. But since the essential passions are common to all we do not speak of them under a word which singles out some particular participant in the

essential thing. Thus we do not call John Martin's friend when we simply mean to indicate the natural friendship whereby we are all friends [70] to all, but the friendship which has been generated over and above that which is natural, and which is proper and distinct in individual persons. Thus no man is called a philosopher in virtue of the common love. Of true  
friendship

Aristotle proposes, in the eighth of the *Ethics*, to call him a friend whose friendship is not hidden from the person loved, and to whom the person loved is also friendly, so that the goodwill is on both sides; and this must be in virtue of profit [80], or of delight, or of worthiness. And thus, in order that a man may be called a philosopher, there must be the love of wisdom which creates goodwill on the one side, and there must be the zeal and eagerness which begets goodwill on the other side also, so that intimacy and the manifestation of goodwill spring up between them. Wherefore a man cannot be called a philosopher without both love and zeal, for both the one and the other must be present; and inasmuch as [90] friendship contracted for delight or for profit is not real but only incidental friendship, as the *Ethics* shows, so philosophy for delight or for profit is not real but only incidental philosophy. Wherefore we are not to call any man a real philosopher who is friendly with wisdom in some direction because of some certain delight; as are many who delight in composing odes, giving their zeal thereto, and who delight in the zealous study of [100] rhetoric and music, but who flee and desert the other sciences, all of which are

The true members of wisdom. We are not to call him a philosopher who is a friend of wisdom for profit, as are lawyers, physicians, and almost all the members of the religious orders, who do not study in order to know, but in order to get money or office; and if anyone would give them that which it is their purpose to acquire they would linger over their study no longer. And as [110] amongst the different kinds of friendship that which is for the sake of profit is least to be called friendship, so these, such as I speak of, have less share in the name of philosopher than any other folk. Wherefore, just as friendship contracted in virtue of worthiness is real and perfect and abiding, so is that philosophy real and perfect which is generated by worthiness alone, with no other respect, and by the excellence of the soul that feels this friendship, in virtue of right appetite and right reason. [120] So that here we may say that, just as there is real friendship between men when each one loves the other in entirety, so the real philosopher loves every part of wisdom, and wisdom every part of the philosopher, so as to draw him entirely to herself and allow him to dissipate no thought of his upon other things. Wherefore wisdom herself says in the *Proverbs* of Solomon: 'I love those that love me.' And as real [130] friendship, abstracted from the mind and considered only in itself, has as its subject the knowledge of the well-doing and has for form the attraction thereto, so philosophy considered in itself, apart from the soul, has as its subject understanding, and as its form an almost divine love of the thing understood.

And as virtue is the efficient cause of real friendship, so truth is the efficient cause of philosophy. And as the goal [140] of true friendship is the excellent delight which proceeds from intercourse according to what is proper to humanity, that is according to reason (as Aristotle seems to think in the ninth of the *Ethics*), so the goal of philosophy is that most excellent delight which suffers no interruption nor defect, to wit the true blessedness which is gained by the contemplation of the truth. And thus it may be perceived who this my [150] lady now is, in all her causes and in her constituent principle, and why she is called philosophy, and who is the true philosopher and who the philosopher incidentally.

Of con-  
templa-  
tion

But since sometimes, in a certain fervour of mind, the source or goal of action and passion is called by the name of the action or passion itself—as Virgil does in the second of the *Æneid*, when he calls Æneas, ‘O light’ [160] (which was an act), ‘O hope of the Trojans’ (which is a passion), though he was neither a light nor a hope, but was the source whence came to them the light of counsel, and was the object in whom reposed all the hope of their deliverance; and as Statius says in the fifth of the *Thebais* when Hypsipyle says to Archemoros: ‘O thou comfort of my estate, and my lost fatherland, O glory of my service’; and as we constantly [170] say, pointing to a friend, ‘see my friendship,’ and as a father says to his child ‘my love’—by long wont, the sciences upon which philosophy plants her sight most fervently are called by her name, such as natural science, moral



Of the sciences called philosophy, because on her most necessarily and most fervently does she plant her vision. Whence may be seen how [180] the sciences are called philosophy in a secondary sense.

Now that we have perceived how the primary is the real philosophy in her essence (which is the lady of whom I am speaking), and how her noble name is communicated by wont and use to the sciences, I shall proceed with her praises.

24-27. *Orosius*, a contemporary and friend of Augustine's, flourished at the beginning of the fifth century. His *Universal History*, written to disarm the Pagan contention that Christianity had ruined the Roman empire, was the general text-book of history in the middle ages. Toynbee thinks that Dante derived this date of about 650 B.C. for the founding of Rome (generally put at 753 B.C.) from a passage in which Orosius says that nearly 700 years passed between Tullus Hostilius and Augustus.

43. *Wise man*. Italian *sapiente*, the word I have translated 'sage' elsewhere in this passage.

54. *Act*, the Italian *atto*, in its strictly philosophical sense, corresponding to the Latin *actus*, is contrasted with *potenzia*. If I *can* think, I have the 'potentiality' of thought. If I *am* thinking, I have the 'act' of thought, or thought 'in act.' Thus the word is allied to *form* and *entelechy*. See II. 14 : 26, *note*. The word, as a technical term of philosophy, is much used by Dante in the *Comedy*, but little in the *Convivio*. Here it means pretty much 'activity' or 'manifestation.'

66. Where we use a word to distinguish a special relation, we must be supposed not to be using it in the sense in which it designates a universal relation.

67. 'John' and 'Martin' as in I. 8 : 94 ff.

91. *Friendship* may enter *incidentally* into a relation which we contracted for our own advantage or pleasure; but as long as its continuance depends upon these things the relation is not *essentially* one of friendship.



102 ff. The same sentiment is expressed in I. 9 : 22 ff. and elsewhere.

118. *The soul that feels this friendship.* So I understand the Italian *amica*. The absolute worthiness of the soul loved wakes affection in the loving soul, in virtue of the rightness of its (the latter's) appetite and reason. That is to say, love rises from the worthiness of the beloved and the excellence of the lover.

130-136. *Abstracted from the mind.* Friendship and philosophy are really 'accidents,' that is to say, experiences of intelligent beings (compare I. 5 : 2, 3, *note*), not things that exist on their own account (compare *Vita Nuova*, § 25); but if we abstract them from the mind, in which they really exist, personify them, and treat them as self-existent 'substances,' then we may consider, in the case of friendship, that the knowledge of our friend's goodness is the underlying *subject* or *material*, upon which our admiration is stamped as its *form*; and, in the case of philosophy, that the underlying subject is our knowledge, and the form stamped on it our love of the thing known. Compare II. 14 : 140, *note*.

150. Aristotle (see lines 10 ff. of this chapter) defines scientific knowledge as the knowledge of a thing in its essence or principle and in its causes. We have now seen what is the efficient cause of philosophy, viz., the love that produces it, and what is its final cause, viz., the 'excellent delight' which it secures (line 140, to be distinguished from the inferior delight of line 90), and as we also know its material (science), and its form (love of that science), we have an adequate scientific knowledge of it. Compare IV. 20 : 94-106, *note*.

160. *Act*, see note on line 54, above.

170. I have given the passage as it stands, although our language has not the usage to which it refers. Our 'acquaintance,' however, furnishes a parallel.

181 ff. *How the primary, etc.* I.e., how love of wisdom is philosophy in the primary and real sense of the word, and the object of that love is philosophy in a secondary and derived sense.

## CHAPTER XII

- [(I.) Of the poet's study to win his way to intimacy with philosophy, which study is typified by love.  
 (II.) Of God, all-enlightening and all-seeing, typified by the sun; (a.) and in what sort God looketh upon and seeth philosophy.]

Study IN the first chapter of this treatise the cause that woos which moved me to compose this ode has been so fully explained that there is no occasion to discourse further of it, because it may easily be reduced to the exposition which has already been given. And, therefore, according to the divisions made, I will run through the literal meaning in quest of the other, translating the literal sense where necessary.

[10] I say :

*Love that discourses to me in my mind.*

By 'love' I mean the study which I devoted to acquiring the love of this lady. Where be it known that 'study' may here be considered in two ways. There is one kind of study which brings a man to the habit of the art or the science, and there is another study which works in the habit when acquired, and plies it; and this first it is that I here call love, which formed [20] in my mind continuous, new, and most lofty ponderings on this lady, who has been indicated above; for this is the wont of study which is devoted to acquiring a friendship, because in the first place it ponders on the great significance of this friendship, while longing for the same. This is that study and that affection which is wont to precede the generating of

friendship amongst men, when love is already and study  
 born on the one side, and he who already loves that  
 longs and [30] strives that it may spring up on enjoys  
 the other side. For, as said above, philo-  
 sophy is there when the soul and wisdom have  
 become friends, so that each is entirely loved by  
 the other, as in the fashion stated above. Nor  
 is there need of further discourse by way of the  
 present exposition concerning this first verse,  
 which was discoursed of as proem in the literal  
 exposition; inasmuch as the understanding may  
 very easily turn, by means [40] of its first  
 significance, to this its second.

Wherefore we are to proceed to the second *II.*  
 verse which begins the treatise, in which I say:

*The sun seeth not, who circleth all the world.*

Here you are to know that just as it is suitable  
 to treat of an object of sense by means of a thing  
 which is not an object of sense, so it is suitable  
 to treat of an object of the intellect by means of  
 a thing which is not an object of the intellect.  
 And so, since in the literal exposition the dis-  
 course opened [50] with the corporeal sun, ac-  
 cessible to sense, we are now to discourse of the  
 spiritual sun, accessible to the intellect, that is  
 God. No object of sense in all the universe is  
 more worthy to be made the symbol of God than  
 the sun, which enlightens, with the light of sense,  
 itself first, and then all the celestial and elemental  
 bodies; and in like manner God illuminates  
 first himself with intellectual light and then the  
 celestial and other creatures accessible to the in-  
 tellect. The sun quickens all things [60] with  
 his heat, and if he destroys certain things thereby

The that is not of the intention of the cause, but is an incidental effect; and in like manner God quickens all things in goodness, and if any of them be evil, it is not of the divine intention but must needs be in some way incidental to the progress of the effect intended. For if God made both the good and the bad angels he did not make them both by intention, but only the good ones; then the wickedness of the bad ones followed, [70] beside the intention, yet not so beside the intention but that God foreknew their wickedness. But so great an affection had he to produce spiritual creatures that the foreknowledge of some who must needs come to an ill end should not nor could not hinder God from this producing; for nature would not be to praise if, well knowing that the blossoms of a tree must perish in some certain part, she were not to produce [80] blossoms thereon, and because of the barren were to abstain from producing the fertile ones. I say then that God, who understandeth all (for his circling is his understanding), sees not so noble a thing as he sees when he looks upon the place where is this philosophy; for albeit God, looking upon himself, sees all things at once, yet inasmuch as the distinction between things exists in him, after the fashion wherein the effect exists in the cause, he sees them [90] distinct from one another. He sees this most noble of all things absolutely, then, inasmuch as he sees her most perfectly in himself and in his essence. For if we call to mind what has been said above, philosophy is a loving exercise of wisdom, and this exists supremely in God, since in him is the highest

The  
daughter  
of God

wisdom and the highest love and the highest actuality, which may not be elsewhere save in so far as it proceeds from him. The divine [100] philosophy then is of the divine essence, because in him nought may be added to his essence; and she is most noble because the divine essence is most noble; and she is in him in perfect and true fashion, as though in eternal wedlock. In other intelligences she exists in a lesser way, as though a mistress, of whom no lover has complete enjoyment, but must satisfy his longing by gazing on her. Wherefore it may be [110] said, that God sees not, that is to say understands not, anything so noble as her; and I say 'anything' inasmuch as he sees and distinguishes the other things, as said above, since he sees himself as the cause of them all. Oh most noble and most excellent heart which is enamoured of the spouse of the Emperor of heaven, and not only spouse, but sister and most beloved daughter.

47. *Not an object of intellect.* That is to say 'an object of sense.' The Italian is *così di cosa intelligibile per cosa non intelligibile trattare si conviene.* On which see II. 14 : 24, note.

59. *Accessible to the intellect.* Italian *intelligibili, i.e.,* the creatures of which we can form a conception, but of which we can have no perception by the senses.

68. That is to say, the existence of the guilty angels was not a part of what moved God to creation.

## CHAPTER XIII

[Of wisdom in the angels that fell not. And in men, such as are men indeed; though even in them discontinuously, and only when they are in the act of philosophising. Yet, even so, such men, though many a time they have but the habit of wisdom, and that imperfectly, are to be called her familiars, because of their love of her which doth ever exalt them, and is as it were the soul of all virtuous actions; through which, as through its outward manifestations, it appeals to such as have not yet known it.]

Intelligences, supernal and in exile Now that we have seen it subtly declared at the beginning of her praises that primarily considered she exists in the divine substance, we are to go on and to consider how I declare that secondarily she exists in created intelligences. I say then :

*Every supernal intellect gazes upon her,*

where we are to know that I say 'supernal,' bringing them into relation with God, who has been spoken [10] of above; and hereby are excluded the intelligences that are in exile from the supernal fatherland, for they cannot philosophise because love is utterly quenched in them; and to philosophise, as already said, there is need of love. Wherefore we perceive that the infernal intelligences are bereft of the aspect of this most beauteous one; and inasmuch as she is the blessedness of the intellect, to be deprived of her is most bitter and full of all [20] sadness.

Then when I say :

*And such folk as are here enamoured,*

I descend to explain how she also comes, in a secondary sense, into the human intelligence; and with this human philosophy I then proceed in the treatise, commending her. I say, then, that the folk who are enamoured here, to wit in this life, perceive her in their thoughts, not always, but when love makes them feel of [30] his peace. Wherein three things are to be observed which are touched upon in this passage. The first is when it says :

*Such folk as here are enamoured,*

whereby a distinction seems to be made in the human race; and it must of necessity be made, for, as is clearly apparent, and as will be expressly explained in the next following treatise, an immense proportion of mankind lives more after sense than after [40] reason. And those who live after sense cannot possibly be enamoured of her, for they cannot have any apprehension of her. The second is where it says :

*When love maketh them feel, and the rest,*

where it seems that a distinction of time is made; and this too [is necessary, because], albeit the seunct intelligences gaze continuously upon this lady, the human intelligence may not do this, because human [50] nature requires many things besides speculation (whereby the intellect and reason are fed) to sustain it. Wherefore our wisdom is sometimes only in habit and not in act. And this is not so with the other intelligences whom the intellectual nature by itself completes. Wherefore

Intelli-  
gences,  
angelic  
and  
human



The when our soul is not in the act of speculation habit it cannot be truly said to be in company with and the philosophy [60] except in so far as it has the exercise of philo- habit thereof, and the potentiality of waking it; sophy and therefore she is sometimes with the folk who are enamoured here, and sometimes is not with them. The third is when it tells the hour when those folk are with her, that is when

*Love maketh them feel of his peace,*

which signifies no other than when man is in actual speculation; for study does not make aught of the peace of this lady felt, save in the act [70] of speculation. And thus we see how this lady is primarily of God, and secondarily of the other sejunct intelligences by way of continuous contemplation, and afterwards of the human intelligence by way of discontinuous contemplation.

But the man who has her as his lady is always to be called a philosopher, although he is not always engaged in the distinguishing act of philosophy, because folk are [80] chiefly to be named according to habit. Wherefore we call a man virtuous even when he is not doing a deed of virtue, because he has the virtuous habit, and we call a man eloquent even when he is not speaking, because of the habit of eloquence, that is to say, of speaking well. And concerning this philosophy, in so far as she is partaken by the human intelligence, the following commendations are to show how great a part of her goodness is conceded [90] to human nature. So I say next :



*Her being so pleases him who gave it her,* Perfect in

imper-  
fectness

from whom she flows as from her primal source, which doth ever attract the capacity of our nature and make it beautiful and virtuous. Whence, although certain attain to the habit of her, yet none so attain that it can be strictly called the habit, because the first study, namely that whereby the habit is [100] begotten, can never perfectly acquire her. And herein is perceived her distinctive praise that whether perfect or imperfect she never forfeits the name of perfection. And because she is thus out of measure, it says that the soul of philosophy

*Maketh it show forth in that which she doth guide,*

that is to say that God ever sets of his light in her; where we must call to mind how it was said above that love is the form of philosophy, and therefore [110] here it is called her soul; which love is manifested in the exercise of wisdom, which exercise brings with it wondrous beauties, to wit content in every temporal state, and scorn of all those things which others make their lords. Whereby it happens that the wretched others who behold this, pondering upon their defect, when the longing for perfection comes upon them, fall into labour of sighs; and this is what is meant [120] by

*The eyes of those in whom she shines send  
messages thereof to the heart, filled with long-  
ings, which gather air and turn to sighs.*

37. See IV. 15 : 117 ff.

38. See IV. 15 : 97 ff.

54. For *habit* and *act*, see I. 1 : 15, and III. 11 : 54, *notes*.

55-57. On the angelic intellect, see II. 5 : 76, 77, *note*.  
65 ff. Compare III. 6 : 80-85, text and *note*.

95. *Whence*, that is to say : Because she comes from God, and it is God that draws us to himself in her, we can never, here on earth, perfectly attain to the 'habit' of wisdom, much less persevere without break in the exercise of that habit.

## CHAPTER XIV

[(*b*) How love is the soul of philosophy ; and how the divine love descends directly upon the angelic and the human mind, and indirectly upon all else ; and of the distinction between fontal, radiated and reflected light. How that which the eternal loves is eternal, and how the love of wisdom is conformed to this same fashion of loving eternal things and despising the things that are temporal. How the soul may be tempered by contemplation of her, and how by unriddling many wonders even to our minds she may lead us to believe that all things have their reason in the mind of God.]

Love, the soul of philosophy *b*. As in the literal exposition, after the general praises, we descend to the special, first on the side of the soul, then on the side of the body, so now the text purposes, after the general commendations, to descend to the special ones. Wherefore, as was said above, philosophy here on earth has for her subject-matter wisdom, and for her form love, and for the combination of the one [10] and the other the exercise of speculation. Wherefore in this verse, which begins as follows:

*On her descendeth the divine power,*

I purpose to commend love, which is a part of philosophy. Where be it known that for virtue to descend from one nature into another is nought else than to reduce the latter to her own likeness; just as we manifestly see that in natural agents, when their virtue descends upon things that receive it, they draw [20] them to be so far like themselves as it is possible for them to come to be. Whence we see that the sun, when his ray descends down here, reduces things to the similitude of light in so far as by their dispositions they have the capacity for receiving light from his power. Thus I say that God reduces this love to his own similitude, in the degree wherein it is possible for it to liken itself to him.

And the quality of this creating anew is set forth [30] in saying :

*As it doth upon an angel who beholdeth it,*

where we are further to know that the prime agent—to wit God—stamps his power upon some things after the manner of a direct ray, and upon others after the manner of a reflected splendour; for upon the intelligences the divine light rays without medium, upon other things it is reflected by those intelligences which are first enlightened. But since we have here made mention of *light* and of *splendour*, for the sake of complete understanding, [40] I will explain the difference between these words, according to the opinion of Avicenna. I say that it is the custom of the philosophers to call the luminous principle *light*, in so far as it exists in the source from which it springs, and to call it a *ray* in so far as it exists in the medium (between its source and

Light,  
fontal and  
derived

Love of wisdom supreme the first body whereby it is arrested), and to call it *splendour* in so far as it is thrown back upon some other part which it illuminates. I say, then, that the divine virtue, draws this [50] love to its own likeness without any intermediary. And this may be manifested chiefly herein, that as the divine love is eternal under every aspect, so, of necessity, it behoves its object to be eternal, so that the things which it loves must needs be eternal. And it is after this same fashion that this love makes us love, because wisdom, whereupon this love strikes, is eternal. Wherefore it is written of her, 'From the beginning, before the ages, was I created, and in the [60] ages which are to come I shall not fail.' And in the *Proverbs* of Solomon wisdom herself says, 'I was ordained from everlasting.' And in the beginning of the Gospel of John her eternity may be clearly noted; and hence it arises that where this love glows all other loves are darkened and almost quenched, inasmuch as its eternal object conquers and overcomes all other objects out of all proportion. And this [70] the most excellent philosophers openly revealed in their actions, whereby we know that they gave no heed to any other thing save wisdom. Thus Democritus, taking no heed of his own person, cut neither beard nor hair nor nails. Plato, caring not for temporal goods, took no heed to his royal dignity, for he was the son of a king. Aristotle, caring for no [80] other friend, entered into contention with his best friend save her—to wit with the above-named Plato. And why do we speak of these, since we find others who despised their very lives for these

thoughts, such as Zeno, Socrates, Seneca, and many others. And so it is manifest that the divine virtue, in angelic fashion, descends upon men in this love; and to furnish experience of this, the text in sequence [90] cries out : Celestial thoughts

*And whatsoever gentle lady not believeth this, let her go with her and mark well, and the rest.*

By 'gentle lady' is understood a soul noble in intellect and free in the exercise of its own proper power, which is reason. Wherefore other souls cannot be called ladies, but handmaids, because they exist not for their own sake but for that of another, and the philosopher says, in the second of the *Metaphysics*, that that thing is free which is there for its own sake and not for that of [100] another.

It says :

*Let her go with her and mark well her gestures,*

that is to say, Let her go in company with this love, and look upon that which she shall find within him; of which it treats in some part, saying :

*Where she speaketh there cometh down,*

that is to say, where philosophy is in act a 'celestial thought' comes down, which argues that she is a more than human activity. It says 'from heaven,' to give to understand that not [110] only she, but the thoughts which are her friends, are removed from base and earthly things.

Then, in sequence, it says how she confirms

Philosophy and  
faith

and kindles love, wheresoever she displays herself, with the 'sweetness of her gestures,' to wit all her comely and tender semblance, free from all excess. And, in sequence, the more to persuade folk to be of her company, it says :

*Gentle is that in [120] lady which in her is found, and beauteous is so much only as is like to her.*

Further, it adds :

*And affirm we may that to look on her gives help,*

where be it known that the power to look upon this lady was granted to us in such ample measure, not only in order that we might see the countenance which she reveals to us, but that we may long to acquire the things which she keeps concealed. Whence even as by her means much is perceived in its reason and in its sequence which without [130] her appears a marvel, so by her means it becomes credible that every miracle may have its reason for a loftier intellect, and consequently may take place. Whence our excellent faith hath its origin, from which cometh the hope of that for which we long and which we foresee, and from this is born the activity of charity; by which three virtues we rise to philosophise in that celestial Athens where the Stoics and Peripatetics and Epicureans, by the art of the [140] eternal truth, harmoniously unite in one will.

9, 10. When the mind is engaged, not in acquiring wisdom but in the loving exercise of the wisdom or knowledge acquired, you have the true speculation or con-

templation, the enjoying as distinct from the winning of my lady Philosophy.

42. The received text is *è di chiamare il Cielo lume*, etc., but *cielo* can hardly be right, for the subject under discussion is light in general, and in II. 7: 88-100 Dante expressly precludes the idea that the heaven, as such, is a source of light. I think it is probable that we should read *luce*, though it is difficult to say how the false reading can have arisen out of it. Thomas Aquinas, in his commentary on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, Book II., Distinction 13, Article 3, enters into the subject of light at considerable length, frequently citing Avicenna. He distinguishes between *lux*, *lumen*, *radius* and *splendor*. *Lux* is the light at its source; *lumen* is the general luminosity of the diaphanous medium through which light travels; *radius* is the direct line of the passage of light from its source to the object it strikes, and *splendor* is the reflected ray. In his commentary on the *De Anima*, Book II., Lecture XIV., he returns to the subject more briefly, and says:—

*'Ipsa igitur participatio vel effectus lucis in diaphano, vocatur lumen. Et si fit secundum rectam lineam ad corpus lucidum, vocatur radius. Si autem causetur ex reverberatione radii ad corpus lucidum, vocatur splendor.'* It will be noted that in our passage, according to the received text, Dante uses *lume* in the sense which Aquinas (presumably in agreement with Avicenna) gives to *luce*, whereas in the passage already referred to in the second treatise, he follows Aquinas in calling light at its source *luce*, but makes *lume* conform to his definition of *radius*. It seems as though Dante had not clearly grasped the doctrine of *lumen* according to Aquinas (and Avicenna) and so allows the word now to invade the territory of *luce*, and now that of *raggio*. On the whole idea compare *Paradiso*, XXIX. 13-18; XXX. 97, notes.

49. *Without an intermediary.* That is to say, the divine power descends direct upon her as it does upon an angel. It is not merely reflected. I do not think *mezzo* means 'medium' here.

55-57. I understand the passage to mean that the divine love makes its object eternal and therefore loves eternal things, and since the love which is breathed into us from on high makes us love wisdom, who is eternal, it



makes our love conform to the divine love in loving eternal things. But the received text seems a little strained, both in syntax and in point of logical cohesion.

76. *Plato* was supposed to be descended from Codrus, the last king of Athens. Apparently some mediæval legend, founded on this tradition, represented him as the heir to a throne.

79. The reference is to the well-known passage (*Ethics*, I. 6: 1) in which Aristotle expresses the pain it gives him to dissent from Plato, though without mentioning him by name.

## CHAPTER XV

[(c) The body of philosophy is wisdom or knowledge, in the demonstrations and persuasions of which, (her eyes and her smile), joys as of heaven are revealed and the perfection of human nature realised. Of the insufficiency of language to speak, save by negation, of these things; and how the *desire* for knowledge, as well on earth as in heaven, is measured by the innate *possibility* of the same. Of the secondary delight of virtuous activity, and of its effect upon such as witness its manifestations. Of wisdom as the source of all created things, and of the misery of such as reject her. And (III.) of the travail that we must endure when we seek wisdom and have not yet learned her demonstrations nor felt her persuasions.]

Wisdom IN the preceding chapter this glorious lady is  
the body commended according to one of her component  
of philo- parts, to wit love. Now, in this chapter, wherein  
sophy I purpose to expound that verse which begins:  
c.

*Things are revealed in her aspect,*

it behoves to treat in commendation of her other



part, to wit, wisdom. The text says, then, that **Demon-**  
 in her countenance [10] appear things **strations**  
**and per-**

*which show us of the joys of Paradise,* **sua-**  
**sions**

and it specifies the place of this appearance, to wit, in her eyes and in her smile. And here it is right to know that the eyes of wisdom are her demonstrations, whereby the truth is seen most certainly, and her smile is her persuasions, whereby the inner light of wisdom is revealed behind a certain veil; and in these two is felt that loftiest joy of blessedness [20] which is the supreme good in Paradise. This pleasure may not be in ought else here below save in looking upon these eyes and this smile. And the reason is this, that because everything by nature desires its own perfection, it may not without it be satisfied, which is being blessed; for however much it should have other things, without this it would still be left in a state of longing, in which it may not be with [30] blessedness; inasmuch as blessedness is a perfect thing, and longing is a defective thing, for no one longs for what he has, but for what he has not, which is a manifest deficiency. And in this look alone is acquired human perfection, that is the perfection of reason, whereon, as on its chiefest factor, all of our essence depends; and all our other activities, feeling, nutrition, and all the rest [40] exist for it alone, and it exists for itself and not for others. Therefore, if this be perfect so is that, to such a point that man, as man, sees his every longing at its goal, and so is blessed. And therefore it says in the book of *Wisdom*, ‘unhappy is he who setteth at

Things naught wisdom and teaching,' which is the  
 known privation of being happy. It follows that by  
 but not the habit of wisdom both being happy and  
 seen being satisfied are attained, according to the  
 [50] teaching of the Philosopher. Wherefore  
 we perceive that in her aspect there appear 'of  
 the things of Paradise,' and so we read in the  
 book of *Wisdom* already cited, in speaking of  
 her, 'she is the brightness of the eternal light,  
 the spotless mirror of the majesty of God.'

Then when it says :

*They transcend our intellect,*

I plead my excuse, saying that I can speak but  
 little of these things, because of their transcend-  
 ency. Where be it known that in [60] a  
 certain sense these things dazzle our intellect,  
 inasmuch as they affirm certain things to be  
 which our intellect may not look upon, to wit  
 God, and eternity, and first matter; which are  
 seen with the utmost certainty, and believed to  
 be with absolute faith, and yet we can only  
 understand what they are by process of negation.  
 In this way we may approach to the knowledge  
 of them, but no otherwise. But here certain  
 [70] may encounter a great difficulty as to how  
 wisdom can make a man blessed when she  
 cannot perfectly reveal certain things to him;  
 inasmuch as man's natural longing is to know,  
 and without fulfilling his longing he may not be  
 blessed. Hereto the clear answer may be given  
 that the natural longing in every case is measured  
 by the possibilities of the thing longed for;  
 otherwise it would [80] contradict itself,  
 which is impossible; and nature would have

created it in vain, which is also impossible. It would contradict itself, for in longing for its perfection it would long for its imperfection, inasmuch as it would long to be ever longing, and never to fulfil its longing. And this is the error into which the accursed miser falls, perceiving not that he desires himself ever to be desiring, as he pursues [90] the sum which it is impossible to reach. Also nature would have created it in vain, because it would not have been ordained to any end. And therefore human longing is measured in this life by that degree of knowledge which it is here possible to possess; and that point is never transgressed except by misapprehension, which is beside the intention of nature. And in like manner is it measured in the angelic nature, and limited in quantity to that knowledge which each one's [100] nature can apprehend. And this is why the saints envy not one another, because each one attains the goal of his longing, which longing is commensurate with the nature of his excellence. Whence, since it is impossible to our nature to know, concerning God, and to declare, concerning certain things, what they are, we have no natural longing to know this, and thus the difficulty is [110] removed.

Then when I say :

*Her beauty rains down flamelets of fire,*

I descend to another pleasure of Paradise, to wit the felicity (secondary to this primal felicity), which proceeds from her beauty. Where be it known that morality is the beauty of philosophy, for just as the beauty of the body results from

The  
measure  
of longing

Beauty of the members, in proportion as they are duly  
 soul ordered, so the beauty of wisdom, [120] which,  
 as said above, is the body of philosophy, results  
 from the order of the moral virtues, which enable  
 her to give pleasure that may be perceived by  
 the senses. And therefore I say that her beauty,  
 to wit, morality,

*rains down flamelets of fire,*

that is to say right appetite, which is begotten  
 by the pleasure of moral teaching; which  
 appetite actually removes us from even those  
 vices which are natural to us, to say nothing of  
 the others. And hence springs that felicity  
 which Aristotle defines in the [130] first of  
 the *Ethics*, saying that it is 'activity in accordance  
 with virtue, in a perfect life.'

And when it says :

*Wherefore, whatsoever lady heareth her beauty,*

it proceeds with her praise. I cry out to folk  
 to follow her, telling them what are her bene-  
 factions; namely, that by following her everyone  
 becomes good. Wherefore it says 'whatsoever  
 lady' (that is, 'whatsoever soul') perceives that  
 her beauty is blamed, because it seems not such  
 as it should seem, let her look upon this example.  
 [140] Where be it known that the beauty of  
 a soul is its ways, especially the virtues, which  
 are sometimes made less beautiful and less  
 pleasing by vanity or by pride, as we shall be  
 able to see in the last treatise. And therefore  
 I say that to escape this we are to look upon  
 her; to wit under that aspect wherein she is an  
 example of humility, that is in the part of her

which is called moral philosophy. And I add that by gazing upon her, I mean [150] wisdom, in that part, every vicious man will become upright and good. And therefore I say :

In the  
begin-  
ning was  
wisdom

*It is she who humbleth each perverse one,*

that is, gently bends back whosoever hath been warped from the due order.

Finally, in supreme praise of wisdom I say that she is mother of all origins whatever, saying that with her God began the universe, and specifically the movement of the heaven which generates [160] all things, and from which every movement takes its beginning and its starting, saying,—

*Of her was he thinking who set the universe in motion,*

that is to say, that she existed in the divine thought, which is intellect itself, when he made the universe ; whence it follows that she made it ; wherefore, in the passage in *Proverbs*, Solomon says, in the person of wisdom : ‘When God prepared the heavens I was there, when he walled the abysses with a fixed [170] law and with a fixed circuit, when he established the heaven above and suspended the fountains of water, when he fixed the limit for the sea and set a decree upon the waters that they might not pass their boundaries, when he laid down the foundations of the earth, I too was with him, ordering all things, and took my delight daily.’

Oh worse than dead, who flee from her friendship ! Open your eyes and [180] see that, before ye were, she loved you, preparing

Wisdom and ordering your progress; and, after ye were  
 seeketh made, to direct you aright she came to you in  
 her your own likeness. And if ye may not all  
 children come to look upon her herself, do honour to her  
 in her friends, and follow their commandments,  
 as who proclaim to you the will of this eternal  
 empress. Close not your ears to Solomon who  
 [190] bids you thereto when he says that 'the  
 way of the righteous is as a shining light that  
 goes on and increases until the day of blessed-  
 ness,' following after them, gazing upon their  
 doings, which should be a light to you on the  
 path of this most brief life. And here may be  
 ended the real meaning of this present ode.

*III.* But the final verse, which appears as a tornata,  
 may be very easily brought down [200] to this  
 exposition by means of the literal one, save in  
 so far as it says that, in that other poem, I call  
 this lady 'cruel and disdainful.' Where be it  
 known that at the beginning this philosophy  
 appeared 'cruel' to me, on the side of her  
 body, that is wisdom; for she smiled not upon  
 me, inasmuch as I did not yet apprehend her  
 persuasions; and 'scornful' because she turned  
 not her eyes to me, that is to say, I could not  
 perceive her demonstrations. And the [210]  
 fault of all this was on my side; whereby, and  
 by what has been said in the literal meaning,  
 the allegory of the tornata is manifest; so that  
 it is time, in order to go further on, to make an  
 end of this treatise.

14-18. Compare II. 16 : 28.

42. *This . . . that.* If our reason is perfect, then  
 our whole essence is perfect. I insert a comma after  
*quella.*

64. *Seen*, that is with the mind's eye. I do not follow Dr. Moore in inserting a *non*.

69-87. This passage, so profoundly characteristic of mediæval thought, declares that the passionate longing to ascertain things hidden from us depends upon the belief that they are not really inaccessible to us. All that the disciplined intellect desires to know on earth is essentially knowable on earth, and what it desires to know in heaven is knowable in heaven. Compare *Paradiso*, IV. 124-129, where the attainment of truth in which the intellect can rest is asserted to be possible, together with III. 64 ff., where Piccarda renounces the idea that she and her companions wish to see more than they do, and XXI. 79 ff., where Peter Damiani rapturously contemplates, without desiring to comprehend, the unfathomable mysteries of Deity. Other passages might be added. The conception often held in modern times, that the real intellectual life is to be found in looking for truth, not in finding and enjoying her, is in marked contrast with these conceptions; but many have held (with Comte) that as soon as any limits of knowledge are recognised as absolute the human mind ceases to struggle against them. This would bring us, to some extent, to Dante's position here. On the attempt to distinguish in principle between the thirst for knowledge and the thirst for wealth compare IV. 12 : 111—13 : 52.

90. Compare *Ode XIV.* 69 ff.

127. See III. 8 : 156 ff.

144. *Ode XIV.*, *Doglia mi reca nel core ardire* (referred to in the *note* on line 90 above) was to have been the text of the last book. Compare I. 8 : 131 and IV. 12 : 210, *note*, with lines 114-122 of the ode. There are several passages in the ode that might have given occasion to the promised disquisition, for instance the second stanza, or lines 132-136; but I think 138-147 is the passage on which it would most probably have rested.



# THE FOURTH TREATISE

## ODE III

*Contra gli erranti.*

[*Le dolci rime d'amor, ch'io solia.*]

THE sweet rhymes of love which I was wont to search  
out in my thoughts, needs must I abandon; not that I  
have no hope of a return to them.

But because the scornful and haughty gestures which  
in my lady have appeared, have closed the way to  
me of wonted speech [8]

And because meseems 'tis time for waiting,

Down will I lay my tender style, which I have held in  
treating of love, and I will tell of the worth where-  
by a man is truly gentle, with harsh and subtle  
rhyme refuting the judgment false and base of  
such as would have it that of gentlehood the principle  
is wealth. And, at the outset, I call upon that  
Lord who dwelleth in my lady's eyes, so that  
of herself she is enamoured. [20]

### II

A certain one held empire who would have gentle-  
hood, according as he deemed, to be the ancient  
possession of wealth, with gracious manners.

And some other was there of lighter wisdom, who  
recast such saying, and stripped it of its latter  
phrase, methinks because he had it not. [28]

After him go all they

Who make folk gentle because of race which has  
long abode in great wealth: and so inured is  
such false thought amongst us, that folk call that  
man a gentleman, who can aver: 'I was grandson  
or son of such an one of worth,' though he himself be



nought. But basest doth he seem, to whoso looks on  
 truth, who hath been shown the way and thereafter errs  
 therefrom ; and he hits nigh to who should be a corpse  
 yet walk the earth. [40]

## III

He who defines : ' Man is a living trunk,' in the first  
 place, speaks that which is not true, and further, utters  
 the falsehood in defective guise ; but haply sees no  
 more.

In like fashion did he who held empire err in de-  
 finition, for in the first place he lays down the false,  
 and on the other hand proceeds defectively ; [48]

For riches can not (as is held)

Either give gentlehood or take away, since in  
 their nature they are base. Further, who paints a  
 figure, unless himself can be it, can not set it  
 down : nor is an upright tower made to lean  
 by a river that flows far away. That they be base  
 and imperfect is apparent, for how much soever  
 gathered, they can give no quiet, but multiply  
 care ; wherefore the mind that is upright and  
 true is not dismayed by their dispersion. [60]

## IV

Nor will they have it that a base man can become  
 gentle, nor that from a base father can descend a  
 family that ever can be held as gentle : this is avowed  
 by them.

Wherefore their argument appears to halt, inasmuch  
 as it lays down that time is requisite to gentle-  
 hood, defining it thereby. [68]

Further it followeth from what I have above set down,

That we be all gentle or else simple, or that man had  
 not an origin : but this I grant not, neither do  
 they, if they be Christians.

Wherefore to sound intellects 'tis manifest that  
 what they say is vain, and thus do I refute the same  
 as false, and therefrom dissociate me. And now  
 I would declare how I regard it, what is gentlehood  
 and whence it comes ; and I will tell the tokens that a  
 gentleman retains. [80]

## V

I affirm that every virtue in principle cometh  
 from one root, I mean virtue that maketh man  
 blessed in his doing.

This is (according as the *Ethics* say), 'a selective  
 habit, which abideth solely in the mean'; such  
 are the words set down. [88]

I affirm that nobility in its constituent essence

Ever implies the goodness of its seat as baseness  
 ever implies ill; and virtue in like fashion always  
 carries the import of good; wherefore in one same im-  
 plication the two agree, being to one effect. There-  
 fore the one needs must derive from the other or both  
 from the same third. But if one signifies all that the other  
 signifies, and more as well, the derivation will rather be  
 from it. And let this which I have now declared be  
 presupposed. [100]

## VI

Gentlehood is wherever there is virtue, but not virtue  
 where she is; even as the heaven is wherever is the  
 star, but not conversely.

And we in women and in youthful age perceive this  
 saving thing, in so far as they are deemed alive to  
 shame, which is diverse from virtue. [108]

Therefore shall be evolved (like perse from black)

Each several virtue out of her, or their generic kind, as  
 I have laid it down above. Wherefore let no one vaunt  
 himself and say: 'I belong to her by race'; for  
 they are well-nigh gods who have such grace, apart  
 from all the guilty; for God alone presents it to the  
 soul which he sees within its person take perfect  
 stand; even as to some the seed of blessedness draws  
 nigh, despatched by God into the well-placed soul. [120]

## VII

The soul whom this excellence adorns, holds it not  
 concealed; for, from the first when she weds the  
 body, she shews it forth till death.

Obedient, sweet and alive to shame, is she  
 in the first age; and adorns her person with  
 beauty with well according parts. [128]

In manhood she is temperate and brave,

Full of love and courteous praises, and delights only  
 in deeds of loyalty. And in old age is prudent  
 and just and hath a name for openhandedness, re-  
 joicing in herself to hear and to discourse of others' ex-  
 cellence. Then in the fourth term of life to God  
 is re-espoused, contemplating the end that she awaits,  
 and blesses the past seasons. See now how many be  
 they deceived! [140]

*Tornata*

Against the erring ones take thou thy way, my  
 ode, and when thou shalt be in the region  
 where our lady is, keep not thy business hid from  
 her: thou may'st securely say to her: 'I go  
 discoursing of a friend of thine.' [146]

## CHAPTER I

[Of the author's love of philosophy and hatred of all that is counter to her. Of a pernicious error as to the nature of true nobility. How the author, being brought to a stand in his speculative studies by a certain problem, and still desiring to serve his lady, turned his mind to the refutation of this error whereby men's hearts are estranged from her.]

**How friends love in common** LOVE, according to the unanimous opinion of the sages who have discoursed of it, and as we see by continuous experience, is that which brings together and unites the lover to the person loved. Wherefore Pythagoras says, 'In friendship many are made one.' And inasmuch as when things are united they naturally communicate their qualities to each other, inasmuch that sometimes the one is [10] completely transformed to the nature of the other, it comes to pass that the emotions of the loved person enter into the loving person, so that the love of the one is communicated to the other, and in like manner hatred and longing and every other passion. So that the friends of the one are loved by the other, and the enemies hated; wherefore in the Greek proverb it says: 'All things should be common between friends.' So when I became the friend of this lady, mentioned above in the [20] real exposition, I began to love and to hate in accordance with her love and hatred. I began, therefore, to love those who follow the truth, and to hate those who follow error and falsity, even as does she.

But inasmuch as everything is lovable in itself, and nought is to be hated save for the evil superinduced upon it, it is reasonable and right to hate not things, but their badness, and to strive to sever it from them [30]. And if any other is intent upon this, my most excellent lady is most intent; I mean upon severing from things the badness which is the cause of their being hated; for in her is all reason, and in her, as in its fountain, is the right. I, following her in deed as in emotion, to the best of my power, abominated and disprized the errors of men, to the infamy or blame not of the erring ones, but of the errors; blaming which I [40] thought to make them displeasing, and when they had become displeasing, to separate them from those who for their sake were hated by me.

Error  
alone  
hateful

Amongst which errors there was one that I chiefly reprehended, which, inasmuch as it is not only hurtful and perilous to those who are involved in it, but even to the rest who reprehend it, I set about severing from them and condemning. This is the error concerning human excellence, in so far as it is sown by nature in us, which ought to be called nobility; which error, by [50] evil habit and lack of intellect, was so entrenched that the opinion of almost everyone had thereby been falsified; and from false opinion sprang false judgments, and from false judgments sprang unjust reverence and vilipending, whereby the good were held in base contempt, and the bad honoured and exalted. Which thing was the worst confusion in the world, as he may see who subtly considereth what may [60] follow therefrom. And

A problem  
concern-  
ing first  
matter

inasmuch as this my lady a little estranged her tender looks from me (especially in those parts wherein I considered and searched out whether the prime matter of the elements was understood by God), therefore I abstained for a season from frequenting her countenance, and, as though sojourning away from her presence, I set about contemplating in thought the defect of men with respect to the aforesaid error. And to [70] avoid idleness, which is the chief enemy of this lady, and to quench that error which robs her of so many friends, I purposed to cry aloud to the folk who were going on the wrong path, in order that they might direct themselves on the right way; and I began an ode, the opening of which I said :

*The sweet rhymes of love which I was wont,*

wherein it is my purpose to bring back folk to the right way concerning the proper [80] knowledge of real nobility, as may be seen by making acquaintance with its text, on the expounding of which I am now intent. And inasmuch as in this ode I am intent on so needful a succour, it was not well to speak under any figure, but it behoved me to provide this medicine by the quick way, in order that health, the corruption of which was hurrying to so foul a death, might be quickly restored. There will be no need, then [90], to disclose any allegory in expounding it, but only to explain the sense according to the letter. By my lady I still understand the same, of whom was the discourse in the preceding ode, to wit, that most virtuous light, philosophy, whose rays

make the flowers bud, and bear as fruit that true nobility of man, concerning which the ode before us purposes to speak in full. Nobility

20. *The real exposition.* Compare II. 13 : 3.

46. I take this to mean that even those who are least affected by this false opinion suffer from the general confusion of judgment and moral chaos which it brings about.

62-65. A misunderstanding of this passage has had portentous consequences on the reading of Dante's mental history. See Appendix, pp. 428-430. The word *intesa* is ambiguous; it certainly cannot mean 'created,' but it may mean either 'intended' or 'understood.' If it means 'intended,' the question that perplexed Dante was whether the existence of first matter was part of the divine intention, in the sense of being one of the things that moved God to the creation, or whether it was merely incidentally involved in the creation, without being itself desired on its own account. Compare III. 12 : 68 ff. If, as is more probable, it means 'understood,' the question is a subtle one, which may well have perplexed the student. We understand a thing when we know its causes and its essential nature. Now, an individual cannot be defined. If I make two desks, indistinguishable in form, out of two indistinguishable pieces of oak, my understanding of the nature, etc., of the two must be identical; they are distinguished only by what the scholastic writers call their 'numerically distinct' material. Thus the *form* is the 'intelligible principle,' and the *material* is the 'individuating principle.' Now when we go back to the *prima materia*, which has no characteristics or form whatever, but is the potentiality of everything and the actuality of nothing, it lacks the very principle of intelligibility. In what sense, then, if any, can God be said to understand it? It is as if we should ask whether God could weigh or measure a pure spirit that has neither weight nor dimensions. It is a purely metaphysical (or perhaps only verbal) point.

In whichever way we are to understand *intesa*, then, no question of doctrine is involved. Moreover, if in this passage, Dante were really referring to the question (in dispute between Averroes and the Christian Aristotelians)



whether *first matter* was created by God or was eternal there would still be no implication in the phrase he uses that he regarded it as an open question. For any investigation (or even thesis, compare IV. 29 : 13-36) is called a 'question' by the Schoolmen ; and the headings of the chapters are usually given us in the form of questions. Thus this very matter is discussed by Thomas Aquinas (*Summa* 1<sup>a</sup> qu. 44, art. 11) under the form *Utrum materia prima sit creata a Deo*—'Whether first matter was created by God.' In pondering on this question Aquinas had no doubt as to the answer (which had been given by the Church), and no more need Dante have had, had he found his ponderings on this 'question' so bewildering as to oblige him to turn away for a time to other subjects in order to recover intellectual tone. We have seen, however, that the 'question' which actually was perplexing him (whatever it may have been) was not this.

## CHAPTER II

[Of the division of the ode into (I.) proem and (II.) treatise ; and of the threefold division of the proem. (a) Of his lady's sternness. (b) Of the observations of times and seasons ; and of the author's present purpose. Of the meaning of 'rhyme.' Of a seeming discrepancy between the proem and the treatise. (c) Of the author's invocation of truth, and of the self-contemplation of philosophy.]

**Proem and treatise** At the beginning of the exposition we have undertaken, the better to give to understand the meaning of the ode before us, it behoves us first to divide it into two parts ; for in the first part the proem is spoken, in the second the treatise follows. And the second part begins at the beginning of the second verse, where it says :



*A certain one held empire who would have gentlehood.*

Of his  
lady's  
scorn

[10] The first part again may be comprised in three members. The first contains the reason why I depart from my accustomed speech ; in the second I say what it is my intention to treat of ; in the third I ask aid of that which may most aid me, namely the truth. The second member begins :

*And because meseems 'tis time for waiting.*

The third begins :

*And at the outset I call upon that Lord.*

[20] I say, then, that it behoves me to drop the sweet rhymes of love which my thoughts were wont to search out ; and I assign the cause, when I say that it is not because I purpose to make no more rhymes of love, but because unwonted looks have appeared in my lady which have bereft me of matter for speaking of love at the present. Where, be it known, the gestures of this lady are not here called [30] scornful and haughty save according to appearance ; even as in the tenth chapter of the preceding treatise may be seen how on another occasion I declare that the appearance was discordant from the reality ; and how this may be (that one same thing may be sweet and may appear bitter, or be clear and appear obscure) can there be sufficiently perceived.

Next when I say :

*And because meseems 'tis time for waiting,*

I tell, as already observed, [40] whereof I b.

Of times and seasons purpose to treat. And here we are not to pass dryshod over what is implied in 'time for waiting' (since that is the chief cause of my procedure), but are to consider how reasonable it is to await the right season in all our doings, and especially in our speech. Time, as Aristotle says in the fourth of the *Physics*, is 'the enumeration of movement in respect to before and after.' It is the enumeration [50] of the movement of the heavens, which disposes things here below diversely to receive the several informing powers; for the earth is one way disposed in the beginning of spring to receive into herself the power that informs grasses and flowers, and in another way in winter; and one season is otherwise disposed than another, with regard to receiving the seed. And in like manner our mind, in so far as it is based upon the composition of our body, [60] which must needs follow the circulation of the heavens, is one way disposed at one time, and another at another. Wherefore words, which are like the seed of activities, must be very discreetly retained and let go, both in order that they may be well received and brought to fruit, and in order that on their own side they fail not by sterility. And therefore forethought as to time must be taken, both for him who speaks and for him who is to [70] hear: for if the speaker be disposed amiss his words are often hurtful: and if the hearer be disposed amiss words which are good are ill received. And therefore Solomon says in *Ecclesiastes*: 'There is a time to speak and there is a time to be silent.' Wherefore I, feeling the disposition to discourse of love disturbed within me, for

the reason which has been told in the preceding chapter, thought fit to wait on time, which brings [80] with it the goal of every longing, and comes of itself, as though with a gift, to those who grudge not to wait. Wherefore says St. James the Apostle in his *Epistle* in the fifth chapter: 'Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, patiently enduring until he receive the early and later.' For well-nigh all our troubles, if we come to look at their origins rightly, proceed [90] in a way from not knowing how to handle time.

I say that since it seems well to wait, I will lay down, that is to say I will let be, 'my tender style,' that is the tender fashion I have observed in discoursing of love, and I declare that

*I will tell of the worth*

whereby man is truly 'gentle.' And whereas 'worth' may be understood in sundry ways, here 'worth' is taken as a capacity of nature, or an excellence given by her, as will be seen below. And I [100] promise to treat of this matter with subtle and harsh rhyme. For we are to know that rhyme can be understood in two ways, that is to say a larger and a narrower. In the narrow sense it means that harmony which it is the custom to make in the last syllable and the last but one. In the larger sense it means that whole way of discourse which, in regulated numbers and time, falls into rhymed consonance. And it is so that it is to be taken and [110] understood in this proem. And therefore it says 'harsh' in so far as it refers to the sound of the composition, which to

True and false judgment suit so weighty a subject should not be smooth ; and it says 'subtle' with reference to the meaning of the words, which proceed by subtle argument and disputation.

And I add :

*Refuting the judgment false and base,*

where there is a further promise to refute the judgment of folk filled with error : 'false,' that is remote from truth ; and 'base,' [120] that is established and confirmed by baseness of mind. And heed must be given to this, that in this proem the promise is first to treat of the true and then to refute the false ; and in the treatise the opposite is done ; for first the false is refuted, and then the true is handled ; which seems not to correspond to the promise. And therefore be it known that though both the one and the other be intended, the chief intention is to treat of the true ; and to refute [130] the false is so far intended as it conduces to making the truth more plainly appear. And here the promise to treat of the truth comes first, as the main intent, which brings to the mind of the hearers the longing to hear ; in the treatise the false is first refuted in order that when wrong opinions have been dissipated the truth may be more freely received. And this method was observed by the master of human reason, Aristotle, who always first [140] fought with the opponents of the truth, and then, when they had been convicted, demonstrated the truth.

c. Finally, when I say :

*And at the outset I call upon that Lord,*

I summon truth to be with me, which is that Lord who dwelleth in the eyes, to wit, in the demonstrations, of philosophy. And verily the truth is *Lord*, for when espoused thereto the mind is *Lady*, and otherwise she is a servant, without all liberty.

Philosophy  
self-enamoured

[150] And it says:

*So that of herself she is enamoured,*

because philosophy, which, as was said in the preceding treatise, is 'the loving exercise of wisdom,' contemplates herself when the beauty of her eyes is revealed to herself. And what else is this but to say that the philosophising soul not only contemplates the truth, but also contemplates its own contemplation and the beauty thereof, [160] turning upon itself and enamouring itself of itself by reason of the beauty of its direct contemplation? And thus ends what the text of the present treatise brings, by way of proem, in three members.

47-52. In the *Physics*, Aristotle discusses the conceptions of *time*, *space* and *movement*, showing that the definition of any one of them involves our already having a conception of some other. *Time* is the enumeration, or succession, of movement, and the succession of the heavenly movements is the basis of all measurements of time. Compare *Paradiso*, XXVII. 109-120.

67. A word spoken out of season may be inherently sterile, whatever goodwill the hearer may have.

87. That is, the earlier and the later fruit, or crops.

152. See III. 12 : 94, 95. Compare 14 : 6-10.

## CHAPTER III

[(II.) Of the threefold division of the substantive portion of the ode. (a) False opinions as to nobility. (b) The true doctrine. (c) The tornata. (a) And first (a) the statement, and then (β) the refutation of the false opinions. (a) The distinction between (i.) the false opinion of the Emperor Frederick, and (ii.) the more worthless variation upon it by others. Digression on the seeming support that these opinions derive from the authority of Aristotle, and from the imperial majesty. And first of this latter.

Of subtle divisions HAVING inspected the meaning of the proem, the treatise is to follow; and the better to show it forth it behoves to divide it into its chief

II. parts, which are three: for in the first nobility *a, b, c.* is treated according to the opinions of others; in the second it is treated according to the true opinion; in the third the speech is directed to the ode, by way of a certain adorning of what has been said. [10] The second part begins:

*I affirm that every virtue in principle.*

The third begins:

*Against the erring ones take thou thy way,  
my ode.*

And after these general sections other divisions must needs be made, rightly to apprehend the meaning which is to be set forth. And let none marvel if we proceed by means of many divisions; inasmuch as it is a great and lofty work that is now under our hands, and little investigated by authors; nor let them marvel [20] that the treatise whereon I am now entering must

needs be long and subtle, to unravel the text perfectly according to the meaning which it bears. Frederick of Swabia

I say then that this first part is now to be *a.* divided into two : for in the first are laid down *a, β.* the opinions of others ; in the second they are refuted ; and this second part begins :

*He who defines : ' Man is a living trunk.'*

[30] Again, what is still left as the first part *a.* has two members : the first is the definition of *i. ii.* the opinion of the Emperor ; the second is the variation on his opinion by the vulgar herd, which is bare of all reason. This second member begins :

*And some other was there of lighter wisdom.*

I say then : i.

*A certain one held empire,*

that is to say, such an one exercised the imperial office. And here be it known that Frederick of Swabia, the last emperor of the Romans [40] (I say the last up to the present time, notwithstanding that Rudolf and Adolf and Albert have been elected since his death and that of his descendants), when asked what gentleness was, answered that it was 'ancient wealth and gracious manners.' And I say that ii.

*Some other was there of lighter wisdom,*

who, weighing and turning about this definition on every side, cut off the last clause, to wit, the 'gracious manners,' and clung to the first [50], to wit, the 'ancient wealth.' And as the text seems to conjecture, it was haply because he



**Supports of the false opinions** himself had not fair manners, that, not wishing to lose the name of gentlehood, he defined it according as it made for him, to wit the possession of 'ancient wealth.' And I declare that this opinion is that of almost every one, saying that after him go all those who hold one gentle because he springs from a race that has long been rich; inasmuch as almost all bark out this.

[60] These two opinions, although the one, as has been said, is utterly to be neglected, seem to have two weighty reasons to support them. The first is the Philosopher's declaration that what is the opinion of the majority cannot be absolutely false; the second is the most excellent authority of the imperial majesty. And that the power of the truth which confutes all authority may be the better seen, I purpose to expound how supporting and weighty is each [70] one of these reasons.

And in the first place, we can have no knowledge concerning the imperial authority, unless its roots be found. And these we must expressly handle in a special chapter.

(b) is not taken up till p. 309. See analytical note at the end of this treatise.

28. ( $\beta$ ) is taken up parenthetically on p. 259, and regularly on p. 276.

38. Frederick the Second, 1194-1250 A.D. King of Sicily and Naples from 1197, and Emperor from 1212. The best accounts of him for the purpose of the student of Dante will be found in the pages of Villani. (*Selections from the Chronicles of Villani*. Selfe & Wicksteed. Constable).

64. There are several passages in Aristotle which Dante may have had in his mind, but probably he was thinking of *Ethics*, VII. xiv.: 5 : *Fama autem non omnino*



*perditur quam populi multi famant*, which is really a quotation (from Hesiod), though there was nothing in the translation to enable Dante to recognise it as such. It is extremely strange that Dante has overlooked the fact that the very portion of Frederick's definition which he criticises is directly taken from Aristotle himself. ('For nobility is ancient wealth and virtue,' *Pol.* IV. viii. : 9.) This fact destroys the whole of his elaborate evasion of the charge of recalcitrance against due authority, and would throw him back on his nobler principle of the victorious truth, above all authority. Compare IV. 3 : 43-45 ; 9 : 167-173 ; 10 : 9-12, 54-65 ; see Appendix, p. 427.

## CHAPTER IV

[Of the need of a supreme head to regulate human affairs. That the Roman empire was established to meet this need ; two great proofs of which shall be shown in the next chapter.]

THE root foundation of the imperial majesty is **Of human civility** in truth the necessity of human civility ; which is ordained for a certain end, to wit the life of felicity ; to the which no man is sufficient to attain by himself without the aid of any, inasmuch as man hath need of many things which no one is able to provide alone.

Wherefore the Philosopher saith that man is by nature a [10] social animal. And as an individual man requires the companionship of home and household for his completeness, so likewise a household requires a district for its completeness, since otherwise it would suffer many defects which would be a hindrance to felicity. And since a district cannot satisfy itself in everything, needs must there be a city for its satisfaction. And

The evil further the city requires for its arts and for its  
of wars defence [20] to have mutual relations and  
brotherhood with the neighbouring cities;  
wherefore the kingdom was instituted. And  
inasmuch as the human mind rests not in the  
limited possession of land, but ever, as we see  
by experience, desires to acquire more territory,  
needs must discords and wars arise betwixt  
kingdom and kingdom. Which things are the  
tribulations of cities, and through the cities of  
districts, and through the districts of households,  
and [30] through the households of man;  
and thus is felicity impeded. Wherefore to  
abolish these wars and their causes needs must  
all the earth and whatsoever is given to the  
generations of men for a possession be a mon-  
archy, that is one single principedom having one  
prince; who, possessing all things and not being  
able to desire more, shall keep the kings con-  
tented within the boundaries of their kingdoms,  
so that there shall be peace between them, in  
[40] which peace the cities may have rest, and  
in this rest the districts may love one another,  
and in this love the households may receive  
whatsoever they need, and when they have  
received this, man may live in felicity, which  
is that whereto man was born.

And upon these arguments the words of the  
Philosopher may be brought to bear, which he  
utters in the *Politics*, that when divers things  
are ordained for one end, one of them must be  
the ruler or guide, and all the rest must be ruled  
or [50] guided by it. Even as we see in a ship  
that the divers offices and divers ends of it are  
ordained to one single end, to wit the making

of the desired port by a prosperous voyage; wherein, like as each officer regulates his proper function to its proper end, there is one who considers all these ends and regulates them with a view to the final end; and he is the shipmaster, whose voice all are bound to obey. **Unity of command**  
And we see the same [60] thing in religious orders, and in armies, and in all things which are ordained, as aforesaid, to some end. Whereby it may be manifestly seen that for the perfection of the universal religious order of the human race it behoves that there should be one, as shipmaster, who, considering the diverse conditions of the world, and ordaining the diverse and necessary offices, should have the universal and indisputable office of commanding the whole. And this office [70] is called by pre-eminence empire, without any qualification, because it is the command of all the other commands. And hence he who is appointed to this office is called emperor because he is the commander who issues all the commands. And what he says is law to all, and he ought to be obeyed by all, and every other command draws its strength and authority from his. And thus it is manifest that the imperial [80] majesty and authority is the loftiest in the fellowship of man.

But some might cavil and say that although the office of empire be necessary for the world yet it follows not that reason requires the authority of the roman prince is to be supreme (which is the point we have to make); but that the Roman power was acquired not by reason nor by decree of universal consent, but by [90] force, which seems to be the contrary of reason.

Authority  
of Rome

To this we may answer readily that the election of this supreme officer must needs proceed, in the first instance, from the counsel which maketh provision for all, to wit from God; since the election would else not have been equal for all; since, before the above-said officer, there was no one giving his mind to the general good. And because there never was, nor shall ever be, a nature more sweet in the exercise of lordship, more firm [100] in its maintenance, nor more subtle in acquiring it than the nature of the Latin folk (as may be seen by experience), and especially that of the hallowed people in whom the high Trojan blood was infused, God chose that people for such office. So we see that since it might not be attained without the greatest virtue, nor exercised without the greatest and most humane [110] benignity, this was the people who was best disposed to it. Wherefore at the beginning the Roman people got it not by force, but by the divine providence which transcends all reason. And herein doth Virgil agree, in the first of the *Æneid*, where, speaking in the person of God, he says: 'To them (to wit, to the Romans) I assign no limit of things nor of time. To them have I given empire without end.' Force then [120] was not the moving cause, as the caviller supposed, but was the instrumental cause, even as the blows of the hammer are the cause of the knife, whereas the mind of the smith is the efficient and moving cause. And thus not force but reason, and moreover divine reason, was the beginning of the Rome empire. And that this is so may be seen by two most manifest reasons, which show

that this city was imperial, and had [130] divinely special birth and special progress from God. conferred  
 But inasmuch as this may not be handled in the present chapter without excess of length, and long chapters are the foes of memory, I will make a further digression of another chapter to set forth the arguments indicated above. Nor will this be without profit and much delight.

On the relation of this and the following chapter to the *De Monarchia*, see Appendix, p. 425.

3 *Human civility*, i.e., man's existence as a citizen. Compare *Paradiso*, VIII. 115 f. An elementary *society* might be based on difference of sex and age only, but not a *civility*.

36. *Who, possessing all things*, etc. This argument is developed at greater length in the *De Monarchia*, I. 11: 38 ff. It is borrowed from Aristotle. He does not use it in the *Politics*, but treating of government incidentally in the *Ethics* (VIII. xii. (x.), 2), he says: 'For he only is a king who is an autocrat and who has command of all things desired; and such an one, being in need of nothing, would not seek his own advantage, but that of his subjects.'

64. *Universal religious order*. See Appendix, p. 426.

70. *Empire*. Latin, *imperium* = 'command.'

97. Until the Emperor was established, there was no one who aimed impartially at the good of humanity at large; and therefore until there was an emperor there was no one qualified to elect an emperor. From this vicious circle there was no escape except by divine appointment.

## CHAPTER V

[(A) The divine origin of the Roman empire manifested chiefly (i.) in the coincidence of time between the birth of David, the founder of the family whence Mary sprang, and the coming to Italy of Æneas the founder of the Roman empire, and (ii.) the coincidence between the birth of Christ and the perfection of the Roman empire under Augustus. And (B) the divine growth of the Roman empire manifested (i.) by the divine virtue of her citizens, and (ii.) by the divine miracles and favours that protected her.]

Heaven and earth IT is no marvel if the divine providence, which utterly surpasses angelic and human perception, proceeds many times by ways hidden to us; in-

[A. asmuch as even human operations many times conceal their purport from men themselves. But it is matter for great marvel if ever the working out of the eternal counsel proceeds so manifestly that [10] our reason discerns it.

Wherefore, at the beginning of this chapter, I may speak with the mouth of Solomon, who saith in his *Proverbs*, in the person of wisdom: 'Hearken! for I am to speak of great things.'

[i. When the immeasurable divine goodness willed to reconform to itself the human creature (which was parted from God by the sin of the disobedience of the first man, [20] and thereby deformed), it was appointed in the most lofty and united divine consistory of the Trinity that the Son of God should descend to earth to effect this harmony. And inasmuch as at his coming into the world it was meet that not only heaven but earth should be in its best disposition,—and

the best disposition of earth is when it is a monarchy, that is to say, when it is all subject to one prince, as aforesaid, [30]—therefore that people and that city who were destined to bring this about, (to wit the glorious Rome), were ordained by the divine providence. And because the abode wherein the celestial king must enter ought to be most clean and pure there was likewise ordained a most holy family from the which after many merits should be born a woman supremely good amongst all the rest, who should be the treasure house of the Son of God. And this family is [40] that of David. And the triumph and honour of the human race, Mary to wit, was born from it. Wherefore it is written in Isaiah ‘a rod shall spring out of the root of Jesse and a flower shall spring up from his root.’ And Jesse was the father of the above-said David. And it was all at the same point of time wherein David was born and Rome was born, that is to say Æneas came into Italy from Troy, which was the origin of the most noble city of Rome, [50] as testify the scriptures. Whereby the divine election of the Roman empire is manifest enough; to wit by the birth of the holy city being at the same time as the root of the family of Mary. And incidentally we may note that since the heaven itself began to roll it ne’er was in better disposition than at the time when he who made it and who rules it came down below; as even now by virtue of their [60] arts the mathematicians may retrace. Nor was the world ever so perfectly disposed, nor shall be again, as then when it was guided by the voice of one sole prince and commander

Founding  
of Troy  
and of  
David's  
line



Universal peace of the Roman people, as Luke the evangelist beareth witness. And therefore there was universal peace which never was before nor shall be, for the ship of the human fellowship was speeding straight to the due port in tranquil voyage. Oh ineffable and [70] incomprehensible wisdom of God, which against thy coming didst, at one same hour, make such great provision in advance up there in Syria and here in Italy; and oh most foolish and vilest brutes, pasturing in the semblance of men, who presume to discourse against our faith, and with your spinning and delving would fain know what God hath ordained with so great wisdom! Cursed be ye, and your presumption, and whoso believeth on you!

- [B. [80] And, as hath been said before at the end of the preceding chapter, not only had she a
- [i. special birth from God but special progress; for briefly beginning from Romulus, who was her first father, until her most perfect age, that is to say the time of the aforesaid emperor, she advanced not by human but by divine activities. For if we consider the seven kings who first [90] governed her, Romulus, Numa, Tullus, Ancus and the Tarquin kings, who were like the guardians and protectors of her childhood, we may find from the scriptures of the Roman histories, and especially from Titus Livius, that they were all of diverse nature according to the needs of the period of time which was proceeding in their day. Then if we consider her more advanced youth, when she was emancipated from the guardianship of royalty by Brutus, the first [100] consul, even until Cæsar, the first supreme prince, we shall find that she was uplifted not by



human but by divine citizens, into whom was inspired not human but divine love, in their love of her. And this could not nor might not be, save for some special end, purposed by God in so great an infusion of heaven. And who shall say that it was without divine inspiration that Fabricius refused an almost infinite quantity of gold because he would not [110] abandon his fatherland; that Curius, whom the Samnites tried to corrupt, refused a huge mass of gold for love of his fatherland, saying that the Roman citizens desired to possess not gold but the possessors of the gold; that Mutius burnt his own hand because he had missed the blow whereby he had thought to deliver Rome? Who shall say of Torquatus, who judged his own son to death for [120] love of the public good, that he endured this without divine help? And the above-said Brutus, in like manner? Who shall say it of the Decii and of the Drusi, who laid down their life for their country? And of the captive Regulus, sent from Carthage to Rome to exchange the captive Carthaginians against himself and the other captive Romans, who shall say that when the legation had withdrawn, the advice he gave, for love of Rome, against himself, was prompted only by human nature? [130] Who shall say of Quintus Cincinnatus, who was appointed dictator and taken from the plough, and after his term of office laid it down of his own accord, and went back to his ploughing; who shall say of Camillus, banished and cast into exile, that he came to free Rome from her foes, and when he had freed her withdrew of his own will into exile so as not

Divine  
citizens of  
Rome

Divine to offend the authority of the senate, without  
 protection divine instigation? [140] O most hallowed  
 of Rome bosom of Cato, who shall presume to speak of  
 thee? Verily none can speak of thee more  
 worthily than by keeping silence, and following  
 the example of Jerome, who in his proem to the  
 Bible, where he comes to tell of Paul, says that  
 it were better to hold one's peace than to come  
 short in speech. Of a surety it must be manifest,  
 when we remember the life of these and of the  
 other divine citizens, that not without some light  
 of the divine goodness, superadded to the ex-  
 cellence of their own nature, [150] such marvels  
 [ii.] were done. And it must be manifest that these  
 most excellent ones were instruments wherewith  
 the divine providence proceeded in the Roman  
 empire, wherein many a time the arm of God  
 was seen to be present. And did not God set  
 his own hand to the battle in which the Albans  
 fought with the Romans, at the beginning, for  
 the headship of rule, when one only Roman held  
 in his hands the [160] freedom of Rome?  
 Did not God interpose with his own hand when  
 the Franks had taken all Rome and were seizing  
 the capitol by stealth at night, and only the voice  
 of a goose gave notice of it! Did not God  
 interpose with his own hand when in the war of  
 Hannibal so many citizens had perished that  
 three bushels of rings were carried off to Africa,  
 and the Romans were ready to abandon their  
 land had not that blessed [170] Scipio, young  
 as he was, undertaken his expedition into Africa  
 for the deliverance of Rome? And did not  
 God interpose with his own hand when a recent  
 citizen, of small estate, Tully to wit, defended

the liberty of Rome against so great a citizen as was Catiline? Yea, verily. Wherefore we need demand no more in order to see that a special birth and special progress, thought out and ordained by God, was that of the holy city. [180] And verily I am of firm opinion that the stones that are fixed in her walls are worthy of reverence, and the soil where she sits more worthy than man can preach or prove.

Rever-  
ence for  
Rome

91. Probably the right reading is *li re Tarquini*, not *li tre Tarquini*, following *Æneid*, VI. 817. In either case Dante must have intended to include Servius Tullus as a Tarquin (Toynbee).

170. *Scipione giovane*. This cannot be rendered 'Scipio the younger,' for the reference is to the elder Scipio Africanus, who was thirty at the time here referred to. Compare *Paradiso*, VI. 52, 53.

## CHAPTER VI

[Of authority, and to whom it pertains. Of the authority of one artificer over another, and of Aristotle as the supreme artificer, who, contemplating the supreme goal of life, hath authority over all the rest. Of the union and divorce of philosophy and temporal power.]

ABOVE, in the third chapter of this treatise, promise was given to discourse of the loftiness of the imperial authority and of the philosophic. And therefore, having discussed of the imperial authority, my digression must further proceed to the inspection of that of the philosopher, according to the promise made. And our first business here is to see what 'authority' means, because there [10] is more need of knowing it here than in the discourse concerning the Authority

Of poetic imperial authority, which by reason of its authors majesty does not seem to be questioned.

Be it known, then, that 'authority' is nought else than the act of an author. This word (to wit *auctor*, without the third letter *c*) may spring from two principles; the one is that of a verb, dropped very much out of use in Latin, which signifies [20] as much as 'binding words together,' to wit *auieo*. And whoso regards it well, in its first form, will clearly perceive that it shows its own meaning, for it is made of nought save the bonds of words, that is to say of the five vowels alone, which are the soul and juncture of every word; and it is composed of them in lithe manner, to figure the image of the tie. For beginning with *a* it turns thence to *u*, and then goes straight by *i* to *e*, whence it goes back and [30] returns to *o*, so that truly they image forth this figure,



which is the figure of a tie. And in as far as 'author' is derived and descends from this verb, it is understood only of poets, who have bound their words with the art of music: and with this significance we are not at present concerned.

The other principle whence 'author' descends, according to the testimony of Ugucione in the [40] beginning of his *Derivations*, is a Greek

word which is called 'autentin,' which is as much as to say in Latin, 'worthy of faith and of obedience.' Thus 'author,' so derived, is understood of every person worthy of being believed and obeyed. And hence comes that word of which we are treating, namely, 'authority'; whereby we may see that 'authority' is as much as 'utterance worthy of faith and of obedience.'

Of Aristotle's authority

[50] It is manifest that Aristotle is most worthy of faith and of obedience. And that his words are the supreme and most lofty authority may be thus proved: Amongst the workers and artificers of divers arts and operations which are ordained for one final operation or art, the artificer or operator of that final art should be mainly obeyed and trusted by all, as he who alone considers the ultimate goal of all the other goals. Wherefore the sword-maker [60] and the rein and saddle-maker and the shield-maker should trust the cavalier, and so should all those trades which are ordained for the art of chivalry. And inasmuch as all human activities demand one goal, to wit the goal of human life, whereto man is ordained as man, the master and artificer who explains and considers this should be mainly obeyed and trusted; and this is Aristotle: therefore [70] he is most worthy of faith and of obedience. And to perceive how Aristotle is the master and leader of the human reason, inasmuch as he is intent upon its conclusive activity, it behoves us to know that this our goal, which each one naturally desires, was sought for in very ancient times by the sages. And inasmuch as they who desire

Of the goal of life this goal are so numerous, and the appetites differ in almost every single case, though [80] there be one universal goal, yet was it right hard to discern it, as that wherein every human appetite would find direct repose.

There were then certain very ancient philosophers, of whom the first and chief was Zeno, whose view and belief was that the goal of this human life is solely rigid integrity; that is to say rigidly to pursue truth and justice, without respect to aught; to show no grief, to show [90] gladness at nothing, to have no sense of any emotion. And this is how they defined this integrity, 'That which, apart from utility and apart from result, is, for its own sake, to be praised by reason.' And they and their sect were called Stoics, and of them was that glorious Cato of whom I dared not to speak above.

There were other philosophers whose view and belief was different from theirs; and of these the first and chief was a philosopher who was [100] called Epicurus; who, seeing that every animal as soon as it is born, and as though directed by nature to the due goal, shuns pain and seeks pleasure, said that this our goal was voluptuary (I do not say 'voluntary' but write it with a *p*), that is to say, delight without pain. And moreover, between delight and pain he placed no middle term, saying that 'voluptuous' was no other than 'without pain'; as Tully seems to recount in the [110] first of the *Goal of Good*. And of these, who are called Epicureans after Epicurus, was Torquatus, the noble Roman, descended from the blood of the glorious Torquatus of whom I made mention above.

There were others—and they took their rise from Socrates, and then from his successor Plato—who, looking more subtly, and seeing and perceiving that in our activities we might and did err by excess and [120] by defect, said that activity without excess and without defect, according to the standard of the mean selected by our choice, which is virtue, was that goal whereof we are at present discoursing. And they called it ‘virtuous activity.’ These were called the Academicians (of whom were Plato and his nephew Speusippus), so called because of the place where Plato studied, to wit the Academy; and they did not take their name from Socrates because [130] in his philosophy nothing was affirmed.

The academicians and Aristotle

But Aristotle, whose surname was Stagirites, and Xenocrates the Chalcedonian, his companion, by means of the almost divine intellect which nature had imparted to Aristotle, coming to knowledge of this goal pretty much by the method of Socrates and the Academicians, put the finishing touches on moral philosophy and brought it to perfection, especially Aristotle. And because Aristotle set the fashion of discoursing [140] while walking backwards and forwards they were called (I mean he and his companions) ‘Peripatetics,’ which is as much as to say ‘they who walk about.’ And because the perfection of this moral science was brought to its limit by Aristotle the name of the Academicians was quenched, and all they who learnt from this sect were called Peripatetics; and these yet hold sway over the world everywhere in teaching, and their doctrine may in a



Philosophic and imperial authority way be called the [150] Catholic opinion; whereby it may be seen that Aristotle is he who directs and conducts folk to this goal; and this is what we wished to show.

Wherefore, to sum up, my main contention is now obvious, namely, that the authority of the supreme philosopher, with whom we are now concerned, is in full and complete vigour. And it is not opposed to the imperial authority, but the latter without the former is perilous and the former without the latter [160] has a kind of weakness, not in itself but because of the disorderliness of men, so that when the one is bound up with the other they are most profitable and full of all vigour. And therefore it is written in that of *Wisdom*, 'Love the light of wisdom all ye who are before the peoples,' which is to say, 'Let the philosophical authority unite with imperial, for good and perfect rule.' Oh wretched ye who at the present rule! (and oh most wretched [170] ye who are ruled!) for no philosophic authority unites with your government, neither by your proper study nor by the counsel of others, so that that word of Ecclesiastes applies to all, 'Woe to thee, O land, whose king is a child, and whose princes rise up early to feast'; and to no land may what follows be addressed, 'Blessed is the land whose king is noble and whose princes eat in due season for necessity and not for luxury.' [180] Give heed who be at your sides, ye enemies of God, who have grasped the rods of the governments of Italy. It is to you, Charles and Frederick, kings, and to you others, chiefs and tyrants, that I am speaking. Behold who sit by your

side to give counsel, and count how many times The goal  
 n the day this goal of human life is pointed out of life  
 o you by your counsellors. Better were it for  
 you to fly low like a swallow than like the  
 kite to make the loftiest wheeling over [190]  
 vilest things.

20 ff. Dante's authority for this extraordinary (and non-existent) verb is the Uguccone (died 1210 A.D.), mentioned a little further down in this chapter. He was the author of a work entitled *Magnae Derivationes*, which Dante uses very freely (Toynbee). In speaking of this verb Uguccone calls it *defectivum*, or defective, which Dante appears to have understood as 'lapsed' or 'obsolescent.' By its 'first form' I suppose him to mean the first person singular present indicative active. In line 31 the manuscripts simply give the vowels in their ordinary succession—a, e, i, o, u. I have inserted the tie as described by Dante.

49. *Utterance* Italian, *atto*, a word which has a wide range of meaning. Here I take it to mean 'expression' or 'utterance.' Compare IV. 25 : 20, *note*.

60. It is one of Aristotle's principles that the ultimate judge of anything is the person who is to use it. The man who is to live in a house, not the architect, is the judge of a good house. The man who is to live in a state, not the man who is to govern it, is the judge of good government.

104. *Voluptade* = 'pleasure.' Some little wrenching has been necessary to retain the relation between *voluptade* and *voluntade* in the translation.

147. The Christian Aristotelians, such as Albertus and Thomas, were commonly spoken of as Peripatetics in Dante's day.

182. *Charles* is Charles II. of Naples, known as Carlo oppo. Born 1243, succeeded to the throne 1285, died May 6th 1309. He is frequently mentioned by Dante, most always with contempt. Compare *Paradiso*, IX. 6-6, *note*. *Frederick* is Frederick II. of Sicily, reigned 1252-1259 A.D., born 1272 A.D., son of Peter the Third of Aragon and of Constance, daughter of Manfred (to be carefully distinguished from his great grandfather, the

Emperor Frederick II., son of another Constance, who was also king of Sicily and Naples). On Dante's mentions of him see *Paradiso*, XIX. 130-132, *note*. A comparison of the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, I. 12 : 35-40 is instructive. There the same two kings are spoken of with scorn, and are coupled with John, Marquis of Montferrat (in power 1292-1305), and Azzo of Ferrara (in power 1293-Jan. 31st, 1308). On the bearing of this passage on the date of the *Convivio* see Appendix, p. 423.

## CHAPTER VII

[(β) The protest, out of due order, against the opinion of the multitude, and how he whom they call noble is oftentimes basest of all.]

The opinion of the vulgar SINCE we have seen how the imperial and the philosophical authority, which seemed to support the opinions before us, are to be revered, we are now to return to the direct path of our contemplated progress. I say, then, that this last opinion of the vulgar has become so inured that without inspection of any argument everyone is called gentle who is son or grandson [10] of any worthy man, although he himself be of nought. And this is where it says :

*And so inured is such false thought  
amongst us, that folk call that man a  
gentleman, who can aver : ' I was grand-  
son or son of such an one of worth,' though he  
himself be nought.*

Wherefore be it noted that it is most perilous neglect to suffer a false opinion to gain footing for just as grass multiplies in an uncultivated

field and mounts up [20] and overwhelms the ears of corn, so that when one looks from a distance the corn may not be seen, and the fruit is finally lost, so false opinion in the mind, if not chastised and corrected, grows and multiplies so that the ear of reason, to wit the right opinion, is concealed and, as it were, buried and lost. Oh how great a thing have I undertaken in this ode, desiring now to cleanse so weedy a field as this [30] of the common opinion, so long neglected of this tillage. Verily I purpose not to cleanse it throughout, but only in those parts where the ears of reason are not utterly suppressed; that is to say, I purpose to set right those in whom some glimmering of reason still survives, in virtue of their favoured nature: for of the rest no more need is to be taken than of brute beasts; because it seems to me no less a miracle [40] to bring a man back to reason when it has been utterly quenched, than to bring back to life him who has been four days in the tomb.

When the evil state of this opinion of the people has been related, the ode, clean out of the order of the refutation, incontinently smites it as a hideous thing, crying:

*But basest doth he seem to whoso looks on truth,*  
 to give to understand its intolerable perniciousness, asserting that such as say so lie [50] to the very uttermost; for he is not only base (that is ungentle) but the very basest, who is descended from good forebears but is himself bad. And I give an illustration from a way that has been pointed out; concerning which (to make it clear) I must put a question and

Im-  
 patience  
 to protest

The snow-covered plain answer it, as follows : There is a plain, with certain fields and footways—with hedges, ditches, boulders, logs, and well-nigh every kind of obstruction, save on its narrow [60] footways—and it has snowed so that the snow covers up everything, and gives it the same aspect all over, so that no trace of any path is to be seen. A man comes from one side of the plain and desires to go to a house that is on the other side, and by his own ingenuity, that is, by his perception and the excellence of his wit, guided by himself alone, he goes by the direct path to the place he purposes, leaving the footprints of his steps behind him. [70] After him comes another and wishes to go to the same house, and needs only to follow the footprints already left; and by his own fault that path which the other had contrived to find for himself, without guidance, this man loses, although he has guidance, and he twists about amongst the thorns and the ruins, and reaches not the quarter where he should go. Which of these should be called worthy? I answer: he who went before. And what should this second one be called? I answer: [80] most base. Wherefore is he not called ‘not worthy,’ that is base? I answer: because he should be called ‘not worthy,’ that is base, who having no guidance should not journey rightly; but because this man had guidance his error and his fault cannot be exceeded, and therefore he is to be called, not base but basest. And thus he who is ennobled in race, by his father or by some forebear, and perseveres not therein, is not only [90] base, but basest, and worthy of all scorn and vituperation,

more than any other churl. And that men should be on their guard against this lowest baseness, Solomon, in the twenty-second chapter of the *Proverbs*, bids him who has had a worthy forebear: 'Pass not the ancient boundaries which thy fathers set up,' and earlier, in the fourth chapter of the said book, he declares: 'The path of the just,' that is of the worthy, 'goeth forward [100] as a shining light, and that of the wicked is darkened, and they know not whither they plunge.' And finally, when it says:

*And he hits nigh to who should be a corpse yet walk the earth,*

I say, to his further disgrace, that such a basest one is dead, though he seem alive. And here be it known that a bad man may rightly be called dead, and especially he who departs from the true path of his worthy forebear. And this may be demonstrated [110] thus: as Aristotle says in the second *Of the Soul*, life is the being of the thing that is alive, and since life is after many fashions (as in plants to vegetate, in animals to vegetate and feel, in men to vegetate, feel, move, and reason or understand), and things should be named from their most noble part, it is clear that life in animals (I mean brute animals) is feeling, and life in man is [120] exercising the reason. Therefore, if his life is the being of man, renouncing the exercise of reason is renouncing his existence, and so it is being dead. And does not he renounce the exercise of reason who gives himself no account of the goal of his life? And does not he renounce the exercise of his

How the degenerate are as though dead



The beast lives but the man is dead

reason who gives himself no account of the path he ought to take? Assuredly he does, and this is most manifest in him who has the footprints before him and regards them not; and therefore Solomon [130] says in the fifth chapter of the *Proverbs*: 'He shall die, because he had no discipline; and in the multitude of his foolishness shall he be deceived'; that is to say: He is dead who does not become a disciple, and who follows not the master. And such an one is most base. And of him some may say: 'How is he dead and yet walks?' I answer that the man is dead, but the beast survives. For, as says the Philosopher in the second *Of the Soul*, [140] the powers of the soul are graded, as the figure of the quadrangle is of higher grade than the triangle and the pentagon of higher grade than the quadrangle, thus the sensitive is of higher grade than the vegetative, and the intellectual of higher grade than the sensitive; and so, just as if you withdraw the last side of a pentagon you have a quadrangle left, but no longer a pentagon, so if you withdraw the last power of the soul, that is the reason, the man is no longer left, but [150] something with a sensitive soul only; that is, a brute animal. And this is the meaning of the second verse of the ode we have in hand, wherein are laid down the opinions of others.

44 ff. *Clean out of the order, etc.* The formal refutation does not begin till chapter x.

111 ff. That is to say 'to be alive' is the first 'perfection' or 'entelechy' of an organised being which is a fit subject of life. Compare II. 14: 26, *note*.



## CHAPTER VIII

[How the authority of Aristotle does not in truth support the popular error. And under what conditions a man may withhold his assent from an emperor's saying without irreverence towards the imperial majesty.]

THE fairest branch that rises from the root of reason is discrimination; for, as Thomas says in prologue to the *Ethics*, 'to know the relation of one thing to another is the proper act of reason,' and this is discrimination. One of the fairest and sweetest fruits of this branch is the reverence which the lesser owes to the greater. Wherefore Tully, in the first [10] *Of Offices*, speaking of the beauty which glows in integrity, says that reverence is part of it; and as this reverence is a beautifying of integrity, so its opposite is a befouling and demeaning of the same, the which opposite may be called irreverence, or mutiny in our vernacular; and therefore Tully himself, in the same place, says: 'Carelessness to know what others think of him is the mark not only [20] of an arrogant but of a profligate man; which is no other than to say that arrogance and profligacy consists in being without knowledge of oneself, which is the foundation of the standard of every kind of reverence. Wherefore I, desiring to observe all reverence of speech, both to the prince and to the philosopher, while removing what is pernicious from the mind of certain, in order thereafter to let in upon it the light of truth, before proceeding to refute the opinions before us, [30] shall make it clear that in refuting them I do not

Of discriminating reverence

Of the argu-ments of sense with irreverence either towards the imperial majesty or towards the Philosopher. For were I to show myself lacking in reverence in any other part of all this book, it were not so foul a blot as if I were to do it in this treatise, wherein treating of nobility I am bound to show myself noble and not churlish. And first I will show that I do not presume against the authority of the Philosopher, and then [40] I will show that I do not presume against the imperial majesty.

[A, B.

[A. I declare, then, that when the Philosopher says, 'That which the majority think cannot be absolutely false,' he does not mean to speak of outward or sensuous judgment, but of inward or rational; for a sensuous judgment in accordance with the majority would often be most false, especially in the case of the objects common to more senses than one, [50] wherein the sense is often deceived. Thus we know that to the majority the sun appears to be a foot in diameter, which is most false, for according to the research and discovery which human reason, with its attendant arts, has made, the diameter of the body of the sun is five times as great as that of the earth and half a time over. And since the diameter of the earth is [60] six thousand five hundred miles, the diameter of the sun, which seems to sensuous judgment to measure a foot, is thirty-five thousand seven hundred and fifty miles. And hereby it is evident that Aristotle did not mean sensuous judgment, and therefore, if I aim only at refuting this sensuous judgment, I am not going counter to the purport of the Philosopher, and therefore neither do I offend against the reverence due to

him. [70] And that it is the sensuous judgment which I purpose to refute is manifest, for they who so judge, judge only by what they perceive of the things which fortune can give and take away; for when they see alliances and distinguished marriages and stupendous buildings and great possessions and mighty lordships, they suppose them to be the causes of nobleness, nay, they suppose them to be nobleness itself. Whereas if they [80] judged by rational appearances they would say the opposite, namely, that nobleness is the cause of these things, as will be seen below in this treatise.

Of  
reverence  
and ir-  
reverence

And even as I speak not counter to the B.] reverence of the Philosopher in refuting this (as is plain to see), so I speak not counter to the reverence of the empire; and I purpose to show why. But since we are arguing in the face of the adversary, the [90] orator must take great heed in his speech lest the adversary draw matter therefrom to obscure the truth. I who am speaking in this treatise in the presence of so many adversaries cannot speak briefly. Wherefore, if my digressions are long, let no one marvel. I say, then, that to show that I am not irreverent to the majesty of the empire we must first consider what reverence is. I say that [100] reverence is no other than 'the profession of due submission by patent sign'; and perceiving this, we must distinguish between the irreverent and the non-reverent. 'Irreverent' implies privation, non-reverent implies negation. So irreverence is 'withholding due submission by patent sign'; non-reverence is the not avowing of submission which is not due. A man may repudiate a

Of ir-thing in two ways. One kind of repudiation  
 reverence [110] clashes with the truth, when due pro-  
 and un- fession is withheld, and this is properly discon-  
 reverence fessing; in the other way a man may repudiate  
 without coming into collision with the truth,  
 when he will not confess that which is not; and  
 this is properly denying; as for instance, for a  
 man to repudiate the assertion that he is alto-  
 gether mortal is to deny it in the proper sense  
 of the word. Wherefore if I deny reverence to  
 the empire I am not [120] irreverent, but I am  
 non-reverent, for it is not contrary to reverence,  
 inasmuch as it does not clash with it; even as  
 'not being alive' does not clash with 'life,' but  
 'being dead' clashes with it, for it is the priva-  
 tion of it; whence 'being dead' is one thing, and  
 'not being alive' is another, for 'not being alive'  
 pertains to stones. And because death implies  
 privation, which cannot be save in a subject of  
 the habit in question, and stones are not subjects  
 of life, therefore they should not be called  
 [130] 'dead' but 'not alive.' In like manner  
 I, who in this case owe no reverence to the  
 empire, am not irreverent in renouncing it, but  
 am non-reverent, which is not mutiny nor a  
 thing of blame. Nay, reverence (if reverence  
 it could be called) would be mutiny, for it  
 would result in greater and more real irreverence,  
 that is to say irreverence towards nature and  
 towards truth, as will [140] be seen below.  
 Against this error, that master of the philo-  
 sophers, Aristotle, guarded himself in the  
 beginning of the *Ethics* when he says: 'If we  
 have two friends, and one of them is the truth,  
 we must comply with the truth.' But verily,

since I have admitted that I am non-reverent, which is denying reverence, to wit denying by patent signs submission that is not due, we must investigate how this act of mine is denying and not disconfessing; that is to say, [150] how in this case I am not duly subject to the imperial majesty. And since the argument must needs be lengthy, I purpose to demonstrate it in a chapter of its own next following.

Of undue  
submis-  
sion

The reader's 'noble intellect' will not complain of being allowed to draw its own conclusions as to the value of Dante's attempt to show that the popular opinion he is here attacking is not really a judgment at all, whether good or bad, but a sense impression.

49. *Common to more senses, etc.* The Italian is *sensibili comuni*. 'Common sense' and 'common sensibles' are both of them Aristotelian phrases adopted by the Schoolmen; but they do not correspond to each other, and this has naturally caused some confusion. First, as to 'common sense.' That a thing is sweet you learn from the sense of taste; that it is yellow you learn from the sense of vision. Now the difference between sweetness and yellowness is a sense difference, yet neither the sense of vision nor the sense of taste can give you any account of this distinction, for neither of them can take cognisance of both the impressions to be distinguished. There must therefore be a general or 'common' sense which can distinguish between the impressions of the several special senses.

But again there are sense objects of which more than one sense (specifically sight and touch) can take cognisance. They are enumerated by Dante in III. 9: 59 ff., and these are what are known as the 'common sensibles.' It is a cardinal doctrine of Aristotle's that the senses cannot be deceived in their proper perceptions, but that both sight and touch may err in judging of objects of perception common to them both. Compare *Purgatorio*, XXIX. 47. The 'common sensibles,' then, are not the 'objects of the common sense,' but the 'objects common to more senses than one.'

55. The arts attendant on astronomy are perspective, arithmetic and geometry. See II. 3: 54 ff.

79-83. Dante does not in any direct way return to this subject in the sequel of this treatise. But see I. 10: 48 ff.

104. *Privation* can only be said of the absence of something which would have been suitably present. Compare II. 14: 140, *note*.

128. *A subject of the habit*, that is to say, a thing naturally capable of acquiring the habit. See II. 14: 140, *note* (as above), and for *habit*, I. 1: 15, *note*.

## CHAPTER IX

[The emperor's control is limited to actions that concern human civility. Now there are actions which we can make what we like, and there are truths and properties of nature which we cannot alter. Moreover, of our actions there are some in which we can control nature with certainty and make her our servant, and others in which we must wait upon her; and in these latter there can be no such authoritative rule as in the former. Yet again there are specially delusive cases in which some branch of activity appears to come under an authority which does not really cover it. And all this applies to the imperial art as to others. The emperor has full authority over those actions pertaining to human civility in which we have complete control over nature; he has less complete authority over those in which we have to wait on nature; and he has no authority at all (though confusions may arise on the subject) where something that seems to come within his province is really not a question of action at all, but of truth. And where the emperor has no authority there is no irreverence in not submitting to him.]

**Submission, due and undue** To see how in this case, that is in refuting or confirming the emperor's opinion, I am not bound to submission to him, the argument conducted



above in the fourth chapter of this treatise, concerning the imperial office, must be called to mind; to wit, that the imperial authority was invented for the perfection of human life, and that it is [10] by right the regulator and ruler of all our doings, because, so far as our doings stretch, so far the imperial majesty has jurisdiction, and beyond these boundaries it does not extend. But like as every art and office of man is confined to certain limits by the imperial office, so is this empire itself bounded by God within certain limits; nor need we marvel at this, for we see that the office and the art of [20] nature is bounded in all its activities. For if we would take the universal nature of the whole, it has jurisdiction so far as the whole universe—I mean the heaven and the earth—extends; and this is up to a certain fixed boundary, as is proved in the third of the *Physics* and in the first *Of Heaven and Earth*. Therefore the jurisdiction of universal nature is bounded by certain limits, and by consequence so is the [30] particular. Moreover, he doth bound her who is bounded by nought, to wit the prime excellence, which is God, who alone with infinite capaciousness comprehends infinitude.

And to perceive the limits of our operations, be it known that those only are operations of ours which are subject to the reason and to the will; for albeit there are digestive operations in us, these are not human, but natural. And be it known [40] that our reason is related to four kinds of operations, to be considered separately; for there are operations which it only considers and does not perform, nor can it accomplish any

Limits of  
authority



[Things  
subject to  
our will

of them ; for instance, things natural and supernatural, and mathematics ; and operations which it considers and accomplishes by its own act, which are called rational, as are the arts of speech ; and operations which it [50] considers and accomplishes in material external to itself, as are the mechanical arts. And all these operations, though their consideration is subject to our will, are not subject to our will in themselves, for however much we might wish that heavy things should rise upward by nature, they would not be able so to rise ; and however much we might wish a syllogism with false premises to be a conclusive demonstration of the truth, it would not [60] be one ; and however much we might wish a house to sit as firmly when overhanging as when straight, it would not ; because we are not, properly speaking, makers of these operations, but their discoverers. It was another that ordained them, and a greater maker who made them. There are also operations which our reason considers as they exist in the act of will, such as attacking and succouring, standing ground or fleeing in battle, abiding chaste or wantoning ; [70] and these are entirely subject to our will, and therefore we are considered good or bad on their account, because they are properly ours in their entirety ; for, so far as our will can have its way, so far do operations that are really ours extend. And inasmuch as some equity is to be observed, and some iniquity to be avoided, in all these voluntary operations, and this equity may be missed for two reasons—either lack of knowing what it [80] is or lack of will to pursue it—therefore was written reason invented,

both to point it out and to enforce it. Wherefore Augustine says : ‘ If it (equity) were known to men, and when known were observed, there would be no need of written reason.’ And therefore it is written in the beginning of the Old Digest : ‘ Written reason is the art of good and of equity.’ It is to write, to demonstrate, and to enforce this equity that the [90] official is appointed of whom we are discoursing, to wit the emperor ; and to him we are subject to the extent of those operations, properly our own, of which we have spoken, and no further. For this reason, in every art and in every trade the artificers and disciples are, and ought to be, subject to the chief and the master thereof in the respective trades and arts, outside of which the subjection is annulled, because the chieftaincy [100] is annulled. Wherefore we may in some sort say of the emperor, if we wish to figure his office by an image, that he is the rider of the human will. And how that horse courses over the plain without the rider is manifest enough, and especially in the wretched Italy which, without any mediator at all, has been abandoned to her own direction.

Authority  
of  
artificers

And be it observed that the more special [110] a thing is to any art or discipline, the more complete is the subjection therein ; for if the cause be enhanced, so is the effect. Whence we are to know that there be some things so purely matter of art that nature is their instrument, such as rowing with the oar where the art makes an instrument of impulsions, which is a natural movement ; or as in threshing . . . leaven, where the art makes an instrument of

and its limits heat, which is [120] a natural quality. And it is herein, most of all, that subjection is due to the chief and master of the art. And there are things wherein the art is an instrument of nature, and these are arts in a lesser degree; and in them the artificers are less subject to their chief, as in committing seed to the earth, wherein heed must be given to the will of nature; as in issuing from a port, wherein heed must be given to the natural disposition of the [130] weather. And therefore we see that in these things there often arises contention amongst the artificers, and the superior asks counsel of the inferior. There are other things which are not part of an art, but seem to have some relation to it, and as to this mistakes are often made. And in these things the learners are not subject to the artificer or master, nor are they bound to trust him, so far as the art goes. Thus fishing seems to have [140] some connection with navigation, and knowledge of the virtues of herbs with agriculture, yet they have no common discipline, inasmuch as fishing comes under the art of venery and under its command, and the knowledge of the virtues of herbs under medicine or under some more general discipline.

In like manner, all these points which we have discussed with reference to the other arts may be [150] noted with reference to the imperial art; for there are regulations in it which are pure arts, such as are the laws concerning matrimony, concerning slaves, concerning warfare, concerning the successors to titles; and as to these we are entirely subject to the emperor without any doubt or hesitation. There

are other laws which have, as it were, to follow the lead of nature, such as constituting a man of sufficient age for managing his own affairs, and herein we are not completely subject. [160]

Authority  
of empire  
and its  
limits

There are many others which seem to have some relation to the imperial art; and herein those were and are deceived who believe that in such matters an imperial pronouncement carries authority. For instance, as to 'manhood,' we are not to accept any imperial judgment on the ground of its being the emperor's. So let us render to God that which is God's. And accordingly we are not to trust nor accept the emperor Nero, who said that [170] manhood was beauty and strength of body, but him who should say that manhood is the apex of the natural life, and that would be the philosopher. It is therefore evident that defining 'gentlehood' is not a part of the emperor's art, and if it is not a part of his art, then in treating of it we are not subject to him, and if we are not subject we are not bound to reverence him therein, and this is exactly what we were in search of. Wherefore we may now with full freedom [180] and with full courage of mind smite upon the breasts of the depraved opinions that are current on the earth, in order that the true opinion by this my victory may hold the field of the mind of those for whom it gives vigour to this light.

39. I understand Dante's general position to be as follows: (i.) When we observe, for instance, the heavenly bodies we simply note doings in which we can take no part; (ii.) when we note the laws of thought, as in logic, we note doings which are our own, but which nevertheless are not subjects of volition, for we can no more interfere

with the laws of the syllogism than we can with the laws of planetary movement, and when once we perceive them we cannot think otherwise than in accordance with them ; (iii.) when we consider the nature and behaviour of material things, we have to ascertain facts with which we cannot interfere and which we cannot modify, but upon which we can so act as to secure certain desired results ; but (iv.) there are yet other cases concerned with our own conduct in which we ourselves have control of the result in its inmost and essential nature. This last group may in one sense be contrasted with the other three ; but from some points of view the first two groups may be contrasted with last two, which last two have many analogies with each other. Reverting then, for illustration, to the third group, Dante maintains that (1°) when the knowledge of our instruments and material is complete, so that we can exactly predict the consequences of our action, we can, within certain limits, make the result what we choose, and we must therefore implicitly obey the directions of the man who is ultimately responsible for the result, because he knows exactly what the effect of his orders will be, and he alone knows the whole case and is in responsible charge of it. But (2°) where the conduct of our material and instruments is uncertain, it is possible that the person in charge of the result may direct us to do something which will produce the contrary of what he intends, and here authority is less effective and may be regarded as less complete. And further, (3°) there are cases in which the person in charge may have no knowledge at all of the thing with respect to which he gives orders, because it is only in appearance or incidentally that it comes within the province to which his knowledge extends. Now analogous distinctions hold in the case of that imperial authority which refers to our purely voluntary actions. (1°) In some cases we can make the result what we choose, and the man in supreme charge, contemplating the supreme goal, must be implicitly obeyed, because he knows the exact force of his injunctions. (2°) There are cases in which status is not a matter of definition and legal implication merely, but must adapt itself to facts that cannot be precisely formulated or predicted, and (3°) there are cases which evade the legislator altogether, though he may not see it.

The positive value of this laborious chapter is indeed open to question, but its apparent logical confusions and intricacies yield to a patient study.

47. *By its own act.* That is to say, by actualising itself. By the arts of speech, to judge by the illustration given lower down, logic is primarily intended.

66. *In the act of will*, i.e., they consist in the actualising of will power, as those spoken of in line 47 consist in the actualising of thought power.

81. *Written reason.* That is to say, the Roman Law.

103. Compare *Purgatorio*, VI. 88-102.

118. The received text reads without a break: '*Siccome nel trebbiare il formento, che l'arte fa suo strumento del caldo,*' and the phrase seems to have given the editors and commentators (who take *formento* in the meaning of 'wheat') no trouble. But surely heat is not the instrument of threshing wheat! Aristotle and his disciples enumerate four kinds of local movement: pushing, pulling, carrying and twisting (*pulsio, tractio, vectio* and *vertigo*), ultimately reducible to the first two. It would be possible (with a little goodwill) to bring the action of the flail under *tractio* (which rules the working of the joints of the body) or *vertigo*; and then, if, as I suspect, *formento* means not wheat, but leaven or ferment, the whole passage might originally have read: 'As in thrashing grain, where art makes its instrument of traction [or torsion], which is also a natural movement; or as in making bread rise, with leaven, where art makes its instrument of heat, which is a natural quality.' If (as seems hardly probable, however) *formento* was used in both senses, as grain and as ferment, the dropping out of the passage between the two occurrences of the word would be explained.

135. The question as to what is the proper authority concerned in any operation is precisely where human judgment is most likely to go wrong.

147. *Some more general discipline*, such, I suppose, as botany. The Italian expression is a little curious, *più nobile dottrina*

173. But note that it is, as a matter of fact, Aristotle's own definition that Dante is going to combat. See IV.

3: 64, *note*.



## CHAPTER X

[(β) The refutation, in due course, of the emperor's opinion, which is false in so far as it coincides with that of the vulgar in alleging ancient wealth, and inadequate so far as it alleges gracious manners as a cause of nobility. The falsity has two roots, in that neither (i.) riches, nor (ii.) time, can, as alleged, produce nobleness. Under (i.) we have (1<sup>o</sup>) a general criticism of the emperor's definition, and then (2<sup>o</sup>) the special demonstration that wealth, being base, cannot make nobility nor unmake, because baseness has no point of contact with nobility and so can in no way affect it.]

**False definitions** Now that the opinions of others concerning nobility have been laid down, and it has been proved that I am free to refute them, I shall come to the discussion of that part of the ode β. which contains this refutation; and it begins, as said above:

*He who defines: 'Man is a living trunk.'*

And so, be it known that the opinion of the emperor (although he set it down defectively) did in one phrase, to wit where he said [10] 'gracious manners,' really hit some part of the ways of nobleness, and therefore there is no thought of refuting it there. It is the other phrase, which is absolutely foreign to the nature of nobleness, that there is thought of refuting; for it seems to indicate two things when it speaks of ancient wealth, to wit, time and riches, which are utterly foreign to nobility, as I have already said, and as I shall prove below. And i. ii. therefore the refutation falls into two parts. First, riches [20] are rejected and then time



is rejected as causes of nobleness. The second part begins : Irrelevance of riches and time

*Nor will they have it that a base man can become gentle.*

Be it known that to reject 'riches' is to refute not only that part of the emperor's opinion that indicates riches, but the whole of the opinion of the vulgar herd, which was based on riches alone. The first part is divided into 1°, 2°. two, [30] for in the first it is asserted generally that the emperor was wrong in his definition of nobility ; in the second is shown the reason why ; and this second part begins :

*For riches can not (as is held).*

I say then 1°.

*He who defines : 'Man is a living trunk,'*

firstly speaks not the truth (that is to say, speaks false) in so far as he says 'trunk,' and then not the whole thing (that is to say, speaks it defectively), in so far as he says [40] 'living' and does not say 'rational,' which differentiates man from beasts. Then I say that in like manner did he who 'held empire' err in his definition ; and I say not 'emperor,' but 'who held empire,' to indicate that, as said above, deciding this question is beside the imperial office. Then I say that he erred in like manner, because he laid down a false subject of nobility, namely, 'ancient [50] wealth,' and then proceeded to a defective form (or differentiating principle), to wit 'gracious manners,' which do not comprehend the whole formal principle of nobleness, but a very small

Art in part of it, as will be shown below. And we are defining not to overlook (though the text says nought about it) that in this matter messer the emperor not only erred in the phrases of his definition, but also in his mode of defining (although fame proclaims him to have been a great [60] logician and clerk), for the definition of nobleness would be more suitably drawn from its effects than from its sources, inasmuch as it appears itself to have the character of a source, which cannot be made known by the things that precede it but by the things that follow from it. Then  
2°. when I say :

*For riches can not (as is held),*

i. ii. I show that they cannot cause nobleness, because they are base; and I show that they cannot take it away, because they are completely severed from nobleness. [70] And I show that they are base by one very great and manifest defect that they have; and this I do when I say :

*That they be base is apparent, and the rest.*

Finally I conclude, by virtue of what is said above, that the upright mind is not changed by their translation, which proves what was said above, viz., that they are severed from nobleness, because the effects of union do not follow. And here be it known that, as the Philosopher has it, [80] whatever things produce anything the latter must needs first exist perfectly in the being of the others. Wherefore he says in the seventh of the *Metaphysics* : ‘When one thing is generated by another, it is generated by it in virtue of existing in its being.’ Further we are to know

that everything which is destroyed is destroyed because of some preceding change, and anything which is affected must needs be some way connected with that change, [90] as the Philosopher has it in the seventh of the *Physics* and in the first *Of Generation*. These things laid down, I thus proceed and say that riches cannot (as folk suppose) confer nobility; and to show their still further remoteness from it, I add that they cannot take it away from him who has it. 'They cannot give it,' inasmuch as they are naturally base, and by reason that baseness is contrary to nobility. And here baseness means [100] degenerateness, which is opposed to nobleness, inasmuch as one contrary does not nor cannot produce the other, for the reason above stated, and all this is briefly appended to the text in the words:

The effect must exist in the cause

*Further, who paints a figure, unless himself can be it, can not set it down.*

Wherefore no painter could set down any figure unless he had first in intention become such as the figure is to be. Further, [110] they cannot 'take it away,' because they are remote from nobleness; and, for the reason stated above, whatsoever modifies or destroys anything must needs be connected with it; and therefore it adds:

*Nor is an upright tower made to lean by a river that flows far away,*

which means to utter naught else than a parallel to what was said before, namely, that riches cannot take away nobleness, speaking as though

**Riches** this nobleness were an upright tower [120] and  
**remote** as though riches were a river flowing far away  
**from** from it.  
**nobleness**

6. Man is really a 'natural organised body' endowed with 'rational life.' To define him as a 'trunk' endowed with 'life' is wrong as to the *trunk* and imperfect as to the *life*.

18. *As I shall prove below.* By implication in the definition of nobility. See chapters xvi. ff.

20 (ii.) is taken up on p. 298.

29. *The first part* (dealing with riches, (i.) in our notation) *is divided into two*, the first of which (1°) deals with lines 41-48 of the ode; but since these lines refer not only to wealth (i.) but also to time (ii.), and even to 'gracious manners,' some confusion is caused by treating them as a subsection of (i.).

60-65. Compare *Purgatorio*, XVIII. 52-54. Also IV. 16: 103 ff. text and *note*. Observe that Aristotle (who likewise has the reputation of being a great logician and clerk) defines nobleness on the same—according to Dante erroneous—principle. See IV. 3: 64, *note*.

## CHAPTER XI

[That riches are (i.) base and (ii.) out of connection with nobility appears from their manifold imperfection (not in themselves as products of nature, but as private possessions) manifested in (1°) their accruing without equity, whether (*i.*) by pure chance, or by (*ii.*) chance supported by law, or by (*iii.*) honest or dishonest scheming backed by chance.]

**Baseness** It now remains only to prove how riches are  
**of riches** base, and how they are disconnected and remote from nobleness; and this is proved in two clauses of the text, to which attention must now be given; and then when they have been

expounded what I have said will be evident, to wit that riches are base and remote from nobleness, and thereby the arguments against riches urged above will be perfectly [10] established. How proved i. ii.]

I say then : i.]

*That they be base and imperfect is apparent.*

And to prove that which it is my purpose to express, be it known that the baseness of a thing flows from its imperfection and its nobleness from its perfection, wherefore the more perfect a thing is the nobler is it in its nature, and the more imperfect the baser. And so if riches are imperfect it is clear [20] that they are base. And that they are imperfect the text briefly proves when it says :

*For how much soever gathered, they can give no quiet, but multiply care.*

Wherein is manifest not only their imperfection, but also that their condition is most imperfect, and therefore that they are most base. And to this Lucan testifies when he says, addressing them : ‘ Without resistance did the laws perish ; but ye riches, [30] the basest part of things, stirred battle.’ Briefly, their imperfection may be seen clearly in three things : first, in their undiscerning advent ; secondly, in their perilous growth ; thirdly, in their hurtful possession. And before I prove this, a difficulty that seems to rise must be explained ; for inasmuch as gold and gems have perfect [40] form and act in their own being, it seems untrue to say that they are imperfect. And therefore, be it known, that they themselves, in themselves considered, are perfect 1°, 2°, 3°.]

By their things—not riches, however, but gold and gems. advent But so far as they are designed for the possession of man they are riches, and in this sense they are full of imperfection; for there is no inconsistency in one and the same thing under different aspects being both perfect and [50] imperfect.

[1°. I say that their imperfection may be noted firstly in the want of discernment in their advent, wherein no distributive justice shines, but absolute iniquity almost always; which iniquity is the proper effect of imperfection. For if we consider the ways in which they come, all may be gathered

[i. ii. iii. into three fashions; for either they came by pure [60] fortune, as when without intention or hope they come by some unsought discovery; or they come by fortune supported by Reason, as by testaments or by mutual succession; or they come by fortune aiding reason, as in lawful or unlawful gains. By lawful I mean the earnings of art or trade or service; by unlawful I mean theft or [70] plunder. And in each of these three modes that iniquity of which I speak may [i. be observed; for hidden wealth which is discovered or rediscovered oftener presents itself to the bad than to the good; and this is so obvious that it needs no proof. Indeed, I have seen the place on the ribs of a mountain in Tuscany, called Falterona, where the basest churl of the whole country side discovered, as he was digging, more than a [80] bushel of santelénas of finest silver, which had been waiting for him maybe a thousand years or more. And it was because he noted this want of equity that Aristotle declared that ‘the more subject a man is to understanding the less subject he is to

fortune.' And I affirm that inheritance by will in every  
 or by succession oftener comes to the bad than sort  
 to the good; and of this I will not bring any ii.  
 evidence, but let each man turn his [90] eyes  
 round his own neighbourhood and he will per-  
 ceive — that of which I speak not, so as to  
 cast no smirch on any. Would that it were  
 God's pleasure that what the Provençal desired  
 should come to pass, that 'whoso is not heir of  
 the excellence should lose the inheritance of  
 the possessions.' And I affirm that gain is iii.]  
 precisely that which comes oftener to the bad  
 than to the good; for illegitimate gains never  
 come to the good at all, because they reject them.  
 What good man [100] will ever seek gain by  
 force or by fraud? It were impossible; for by  
 the very choice of the unlawful undertaking he  
 would cease to be good. And lawful gains  
 rarely come to the good, because, since much  
 anxious care is needful thereto, and the anxious  
 care of the good man is directed to weightier  
 matters, rarely does the good man give sufficient  
 attention thereto. Wherefore it is clear that in  
 every way [110] the advent of these riches is  
 iniquitous, and therefore our Lord called them  
 iniquitous when he said, 'Make to yourselves  
 friends of the money of iniquity,' inviting and  
 encouraging men to liberality in benefactions  
 which are the begetters of friends. And how  
 fair an exchange does he make who gives of  
 these most imperfect things in order to have and  
 to gain perfect things, such as are the hearts of  
 worthy men! And this market is open [120]  
 every day. Verily this merchandise is unlike  
 others, for when the thought is to purchase one



The true market man by the benefaction, thousands are purchased by it. And who has not Alexander in his heart even yet for his royal benefactions? Who has not the good King of Castile in his heart, or Saladin, or the good Marquess of Monferrato, or the good Count of Toulouse, or Bertram de Born, or Galleazzo of Montefeltro, when mention [130] is made of their donations? Truly not only those who would gladly do the like, but they who would sooner die than do it, love their memory.

4. *Two clauses of the text*, namely lines 56-60 of the ode.

55. *Iniquity*. The proper translation would be *inequity*, but it seems necessary to adopt *iniquity* to lead up to the concluding passage.

63. *Reason*=law.

64. *By testament or by mutual succession*. The Italian is *per testamenti o per mutua successione*. The meaning is obviously 'by will or by intestate succession.' Compare line 87 of this chapter, where the Italian is *li retaggi legati e caduti*. But *mutua successio* does not appear to be a term of Roman law. It is tempting to suggest *muta*, which would explain itself, though it is not a recognised term of law.

86. Toynbee, in a note on this passage, shows (amongst other things) that the proper pronounciation is santeléna, not santélena. The name seems to have been applied to the Byzantine coins, and then to coins in general.

94 f. Compare *Purgatorio*, VII. 115-120.

125. Toynbee has conclusively identified the King of Castile as Alfonso VIII., the son-in-law of our Henry II. (reigned 1158-1214 A.D.); the Count of Toulouse as Raymond V. (in power 1148-1194 A.D.); and the Count of Montferrat as Boniface II. (in power 1192-1207 A.D.). As to the others, there never has been any doubt. Galeazzo of Montefeltro was a cousin of the more celebrated Guido (compare IV. 28 : 61, and *Inferno*, XXVII.), and was a man of note in his day. For Bertram de Born, see *Inferno*, XXVIII. and *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, II. 2 : 79-85.

## CHAPTER XI

The baseness of riches further demonstrated by (2<sup>o</sup>) the insidious danger involved in their deceitful promises, and the craving that comes with their growth. A digression on the difference between the pernicious progress of him who goes astray in pursuit of wealth and the successive illusions by which he who is on the true path (no less than he who is on the wrong) ever supposes himself to be close upon the goal.]

As has been said, the imperfection of riches **Peril of** may be observed not only in their undiscerning **riches** advent, but pre-eminently in their perilous growth; and therefore the text makes mention 2<sup>o</sup>.] only of that wherein the defect may be most readily perceived, saying of them that 'how much soever gathered' they not only give no rest but create more thirst, so as to make folk still more [10] defective and imperfect. And here be it known that defective things may harbour their defects in such fashion that they appear not at first sight, the imperfection hiding under a pretext of perfection; or they may so harbour them as completely to reveal them, so that the imperfection is recognised openly on the surface. And those things which at first conceal their defects [20] are the most dangerous; because, in many cases, we cannot be on our guard against them, as we see in the instance of a traitor who in appearance shows himself a friend, so that he begets in us a confidence in him, and beneath the pretext of friendship he hides the defect of enmity. And it is in this fashion that riches are dangerously imperfect in their growth; for, sub-

**Insatiate** mitting certain things to us which they promise,  
**greed** they actually bring the contrary. The [30] false  
 traitresses ever promise to make him who gathers  
 them full of satisfaction when they have been  
 amassed up to a certain sum; and with this  
 promise they lead the human will to the vice of  
 avarice. And this is why Boethius in that of  
*Consolation* calls them perilous, saying: 'Ah me,  
 who was he who first dug out the weights of  
 hidden gold, and the stones that sought to hide  
 themselves, those precious perils?' The false  
 traitresses [40] promise (if it be well considered)  
 to remove every thirst and every want and to bring  
 satiety and sufficiency; for this is what they do at  
 first to every man, confidently fixing this promise  
 at a certain measure of their growth; and then,  
 when they are amassed to that point, in place of  
 satiety and of refreshment, they give and produce  
 the thirst of a feverish bosom and not to be  
 endured; and in the place of sufficiency they  
 offer a new limit, that is [50] to say, a greater  
 quantity to long for; and together with it fear  
 and great concern for what has already been  
 acquired so that verily they 'give no quiet,' but  
 'multiply care,' which, without them, was not  
 there before. And therefore says Tully, in that  
 of the *Paradox* denouncing riches: 'As to  
 their money, and their splendid mansions, and  
 their wealth, and their lordship, and the delights  
 by which [60] they are chiefly attracted, never  
 in truth have I ranked them amongst things  
 good or desirable; inasmuch as I saw for a  
 certainty that in the abundance of these things  
 men longed most for the very things wherein they  
 abounded. For never is the thirst of cupidity

filled nor sated. And not only are they tortured by the longing to increase their possessions, but they are also tortured by fear [70] of losing them.' And all these words are Tully's, and so they stand in that book which has been mentioned. And for further witness to this imperfection behold Boethius declaring in that of *Consolation*: 'Though the goddess of riches should bestow as much as the sand rolled by the wind-tossed sea, or as many as the stars that shine, the human race will not cease to wail.' And since it is fitting to gather yet more evidence to bring this to [80] proof, let us pass by all that Solomon and his father cried out against them, all that Seneca, especially in writing to Lucilius, all that Horace, all that Juvenal, and briefly all that every writer, every poet, and all that the ruthless divine scripture cries out against these false harlots, full of all defects; and that our faith may be drawn from our own eyes, let us give heed to the life of them who chase [90] them, and see in what security they live when they have gathered of them, how content they are, how reposeful! And what else, day by day, imperils and slays cities, countries and single persons so much as the new amassing of wealth by anyone? Which amassing reveals new longings, the goal of which may not be reached without wrong to someone. And what else is the one and the other Reason, I mean the canonical and the civil, intended to cure so much as to make defence against the greed which grows as riches are amassed? Verily the one [100] and the other Reason manifests it sufficiently if we read their beginnings—I mean

Misery  
of the  
avaricious

Love of the beginnings of their scripture. Oh how manifest, nay, rather how most manifest, is it that in their growth they are utterly imperfect, since nought save imperfection can spring from them when they are gathered [110] together! And this it is that the text affirms.

But here by way of difficulty arises a question which we must not omit to ask and to answer. Some caviller against the truth might say that if riches are imperfect and therefore base because, as they are acquired, the longing for them increases, by like reason knowledge should be imperfect and base, since in the acquiring of it the longing for it doth ever increase; [120] wherefore Seneca says: 'Had I one foot in the grave I should wish to learn.' But it is not true that knowledge is made base by imperfection. Therefore, by the destruction of the consequent, the increase of longing does not produce baseness in knowledge. That knowledge is perfect is manifest from the Philosopher in the sixth of the *Ethics*, who says that 'knowledge is a perfect account of things which are certain.' To this question a brief answer must be [130] given, but first we must see whether in the acquisition of knowledge the longing for it does so expand as is asserted in the question, and whether it is for a reason for which I assert that not only in the acquisition of knowledge and of wealth, but in every acquisition, human desire dilates, though in different ways; which reason is this, that the supreme longing of everything, and that first given to it by nature, [140] is to return to its first principle. And inasmuch as God is the first principle of our souls, and hath

made them like to himself, even as it is written, ever  
'Let us make man in our image and after our growing  
likeness,' the soul itself most chiefly longs to  
return to him. And like a pilgrim who is  
travelling on a road where he hath never been  
before, who believes that every house which he  
sees from afar is the hostel, and finding that it is  
not directs his [150] belief to another, and so  
from house to house until he comes to the hostel ;  
even so our soul, so soon as it enters upon the  
new and never-yet-made journey of life, directs  
its eyes to the goal of its supreme good, and  
therefore whatever it sees that appears to have  
some good in it, it thinks to be it. And because  
its knowledge is at first imperfect, through having  
no experience or instruction, little goods appear  
great to it ; [160] and therefore it begins first  
from them in its longing. And so we see little  
children intensely longing for an apple, and then  
going on further, longing for a little bird, and  
then further on longing for fine clothes, and then  
a horse, and then a mistress, and then wealth,  
but not much, then much and then enormous.  
And this comes to pass because in none of these  
things does he find that for which he is ever  
searching, but believes he will find it further on.  
[170] Wherefore we may perceive that one  
desirable thing stands in front of the other before  
the eyes of our soul, something after the fashion  
of a pyramid, wherein the smallest part first  
covers all the rest, and is as it were the apex of  
the supreme object of longing, which is God, as  
it were the base of all the rest. Wherefore, the  
further we proceed from the apex towards the  
base, the greater do objects of our longing



The true path and the false appear ; and this is why [180] in the process of acquisition the longings of men become more capacious one after the other.

But in truth we may lose this way in error, just as we may lose the paths of earth ; for even as from one city to another there must needs be a best and straightest way, and another which ever recedes therefrom, to wit the one which goes in the opposite direction, and many others, some departing less from it and some approaching it less : so in human life are divers paths, of which [190] one is the truest and another the falsest, and certain less false and certain less true. And even as we see that the path which goeth straightest to the city fulfilleth the longing and giveth rest after the toil, and that which goeth the contrary way never accomplisheth it, and may never give rest, so it cometh to pass in our life that he who taketh the right path reacheth the goal and hath rest, but he who goeth astray never reacheth it, but with great toil of [200] his mind ever gazeth before him with greedy eyes. Wherefore, although this discourse doth not fully answer the question raised above, yet doth it at least clear the way for the answer, for it maketh us perceive that every longing of ours dilateth not after one same fashion ; but since this chapter is somewhat protracted the answer to the question must be given in a new chapter, wherein will be ended the whole disputation which [210] it is our present purpose to make against riches.

42. *This is what they do. I.e.,* this promise they actually make at the outset. It does not mean that, for a time, they keep their promise.



55. In the title of Cicero's work *Paradoxa* is a plural, but Dante seems to have read it as a singular.

83. The manuscripts read *Lucillus*; but the name of Seneca's correspondent was *Lucilius*, and the mistake is much more likely to be due to the copyist than to Dante.

124 f. In such a proposition as 'If A is B then C is D,' 'A is B' is called the antecedent and 'C is D' the consequent. If you can disprove the consequent the antecedent falls, and if you can prove the antecedent the consequent follows; but not *vice versa*.

133 *I.e.*, We are to inquire whether it is a fact; and, if it be a fact, whether it comes under a more general principle which applies to everything, and consequently furnishes no parallel to the special principle which applies specifically to wealth.

140. See *Paradiso*, I. 103-141.

156. Compare *Purgatorio*, XVI. 85-93.

169. Compare *Purgatorio*, XIX. 103-114.

210. *Our present purpose*. The whole of this outburst against wealth is merely incidental. The express treatment of the subject was to have come in the last treatise in connection with the great ode, '*Doglia mi reca nello core ardire*.' Compare I. 8 : 131.

### CHAPTER XIII

[Of the successive conquests and satisfactions in the pursuit of knowledge contrasted with the perpetual defeat and thirst in pursuit of wealth. How the complete satisfaction of the thirst for knowledge, within the limits prescribed by nature, is not impossible. Then (3°) of the hurtfulness of clinging to the possession of wealth, (i.) because it makes men miserably anxious and the objects of hatred, and (ii.) because it kills the excellence of liberality. The conclusion that wealth being base cannot give or take away nobility.]

IN answer to the question I affirm that the desire of knowledge cannot be properly said to increase although, as has been declared, it dilates

Dilation  
and  
increase

Know- in a certain fashion. For that which properly  
 ledge and speaking increases is always one; the desire for  
 wealth knowledge is not always one, but is many; and  
 when one ends another succeeds; so that,  
 properly speaking, its dilating is not an [10]  
 increasing but a succession of great things to  
 small. For if I desire to know the elements of  
 natural things, the moment I know them this  
 desire is completed and ended; and if I then  
 desire to know what each of these elements is  
 and how it exists, this is another new desire.  
 Nor by the access of this am I bereft of the  
 perfection to which the other led me; [20]  
 and this dilating is not the cause of imperfection  
 but of greater perfection. But that of riches is  
 properly an increasing, for it is always one only,  
 so that here we can detect no succession of  
 goals reached and perfections realised. And if  
 the adversary should say that as the desire to  
 know the elements of natural things is one and  
 the desire [30] to know what they are is  
 another, so the desire for a hundred marks is  
 one and the desire for a thousand another, I  
 answer that it is not true; for a hundred is part  
 of a thousand and is related to it as part of a  
 line to the whole line along which we proceed  
 by one sole motion, and there is no succession  
 there, nor perfected motion in any part. But to  
 know [which are] the elements of natural things  
 and to know what each of them [40] is, are not  
 parts one of the other, but are related as different  
 lines along which you cannot proceed by one  
 motion, but when the motion of one is complete  
 the motion of the other succeeds. And thus it  
 appears that knowledge is not (as laid down in

the question) to be considered imperfect because of the desire for knowledge, as riches are because of the desire for them; for in the desire for knowledge desires are successively accomplished and [50] brought to perfection, and in the desire for riches it is not so; so that the question is solved and does not hold.

Goal  
of know-  
ledge not  
unattain-  
able

It is true that the opponent may still cavil and say that although many desires are satisfied in the acquisition of knowledge yet we never accomplish the ultimate one, which is something like the imperfection of a desire which, remaining one and the same, never comes to an end. Here again we answer that this counter assertion is not [60] true, namely, that the ultimate desire is never accomplished, for our natural desires, as shown above in the third treatise, go down to a certain limit; and the desire of knowledge is a natural one, so that a certain limit satisfies it; although few, because of the ill path they take, complete the journey. And he who understands the Commentator, in the third *Of the Soul*, understands this from him; and therefore Aristotle [70] in the tenth of the *Ethics*, speaking against the poet Simonides, says: 'That man should draw himself to divine things the most he may'; wherein he shows that our power contemplates a certain limit. And in the first of the *Ethics* he says: 'That the disciplined man requires to know the certainty of things in the degree wherein their nature admits of certainty.' Wherein he shows that not only should a limit be contemplated on the side of the man who desires knowledge, but on the [80] side of the desired object of knowledge; and

The positive hurt of riches that is why Paul says that ‘We are not to know more than is fitting to know, but to know in measure.’ So that in whatever way the desire for knowledge is taken, whether in general or in particular, it reaches perfection; and therefore perfect knowledge has a noble perfection; and its perfection is not lost by the desire for it as in the case of accursed riches.

- [3°. And how these be hurtful in their [90] possession we are now briefly to show, for this is the third note of their imperfection. Their
- [i. ii. possession may be seen to be hurtful by two reasons; the one that it is the cause of evil, the other that it is the privation of good. It is the cause of evil because by mere watchfulness it
- [i. makes the possessor fearful and hateful. How great is the terror of him who knows that he has wealth about him, as he journeys and as he stays, not only waking but [100] sleeping, lest he lose not only his possessions but his life for his possessions’ sake! Well do the wretched merchants know it who traverse the world, whom the very leaves which the wind tosses make to tremble when they are carrying their riches with them; and when they are without them, full of security, they shorten their way by song and discourse. And therefore the sage says: ‘If the wayfarer had entered on his journey empty he would sing in the face of the [110] robbers.’ And this is what Lucan means to say in the fifth book when he commends poverty for its security, saying: ‘Oh secure ease of the poor life, oh ye narrow homes and huts, oh wealth of the gods not yet understood! To what temples and to what fortifications could

this ever chance, not to know any tumult of fear and the when the hand of Cæsar knocks?' And this negative Lucan says when he tells how Cæsar [120] came by night to the hut of the fisherman Amyclas, to cross the Adriatic Sea. And what hatred is that which everyone bears to the possessor of wealth, whether through envy or through desire to seize the possessions! Verily it is so great that, many times counter to the tenderness he owes, the son schemes the father's death. And of this the Latins have most great and manifest examples both in the region of the Po [130] and in the region of the Tiber. And therefore Boethius in the second of his *Consolation* says: 'Verily avarice makes men hated.'

Also their possession is the negation of good, *ii.*] for, when they are possessed, liberality is not practised, which is a virtue, and virtue is a perfect good and makes men illustrious and loved; which may not be achieved by possessing wealth, but by relinquishing the possession of it. Wherefore Boethius in the same book says: [140] 'Money is only good when, transferred to others by the practice of liberality, it is no longer possessed.'

Wherefore the baseness of riches is manifest enough by reason of all their characteristics, and so a man of right appetite and of true knowledge never loves them; and not loving them does not unite himself to them, but ever wishes them to be far removed from him, save as they be ordained to some necessary service. And this is [150] reasonable because the perfect can never unite with the imperfect. And so we see that the

Their-remote-ness from nobility curved line can never unite with the straight, and if there be any union, it is not of line with line, but of point with point. And therefore it follows that the mind which is upright, to wit in appetite, and true, to wit in knowledge, is not undone by losing them, as the text lays down at the end of this section. And [160] by this effect the text purposes to prove that they are a stream running afar from the upright tower of reason, or of nobleness, and thereby that these riches cannot take away nobleness from him who has it. And this is the method of disputing and refuting pursued in the present ode against riches.

1 ff. The gist of Dante's argument is that though our thirst for knowledge increases as our horizon increases, yet it experiences a succession of satisfactions, not a sequence of thwarting disappointments; whereas the pursuit of wealth never leads to satisfaction at all. Compare *Paradiso*, IV. 124 ff. and many other passages.

12. If I want to know whether there is only one element (say fire) or many, then when I know that earth, water, fire and air are all elements, and that there are no more, I have got that piece of knowledge. And if I now go on to inquire what earth is, that is another thing. It is the difference between desiring to know 'which are the elements' and desiring to know 'what the elements are.'

25. The syntax is (to me at least) perplexing; but I think I have given the sense.

63. See III. 15 : 69-110.

68. *The Commentator*. That is Averroes (1126-1198 A.D.). Compare *Inferno*, IV. 144; *Purgatorio*, XXV. 61-66, etc. He was the last of the great Arabic commentators and was regarded (in Europe at least) as the chief ornament of the younger or Western school, as Avicenna (see II. 14 : 32, *note*) was of the older or Eastern school of Arabic Aristotelians. Averroes, like Thomas Aquinas in the succeeding century, composed

his Aristotelian treatises in the form of regular commentaries on the text of Aristotle's works. In the third book of his commentary on the *De Anima*, in one of the great excursions in which he develops his views, he maintains (amongst other things) that the intellect in man is capable of being so far assimilated to God that it, in a sense, knows (and indeed itself is) all existence; that this involves a certain continuity of the concrete intellect of the individual man with the abstract and eternal intellect; and that this continuity is to be realised by a study of the speculative sciences, from which, if they follow their true course, it will naturally flow, whereas if they take a wrong course such continuity will never be reached.

72. In *Ethics*, X. vii: 8, Aristotle protests against all *suadentes humana sapere hominem* and *mortalia mortalem*; and himself urges man to make himself *in quantum contingit immortalem*, and *omnia facere ad vivere secundum optimum eorum quae in ipso*. Dante may have learned that Simonides was aimed at from the comments of Aquinas, here and elsewhere; or possibly direct from *Metaphysics*, I. ii: 12, where Simonides is named and is said to base his contention on the supposed jealousy of the gods.

108. *The sage*, in this case, is Juvenal (*Sat. X. 22*). Dante habitually calls poets sages, as in the celebrated passage in the *Vita Nuova*, *Sonnet X. line 2* (§ 20: 14.)

160. *By this effect. I.e.*, by observing that their effect on the noble mind is *nil*.

## CHAPTER XIV

[(ii.) How they who say that the lapse of time is requisite to create nobility, themselves (1<sup>o</sup>) add the condition that neither a churl nor a churl's son can become noble, which destroys their own contention; and how four absurdities would follow should they seek to remove this contradiction.]

THE error of others having been refuted in that Irrelevant part wherein it rests upon wealth . . . in that vance of part wherein it asserted time to be a cause of time



Churl and noble-ness, saying 'of ancient wealth'; and this gentle refutation is conducted in that part which begins:

ii. *Nor will they have it that a base man can become gentle.*

1<sup>o</sup>, 2<sup>o</sup>. And first this is refuted by an argument of the very ones who are in [10] this error; then, for their greater confusion, this argument of theirs is itself also refuted, and this is done when it says:

*Further, it followeth from what I have above set down.*

Finally, the conclusion is reached that their error is manifest, and therefore it is time to turn to the truth, and this is done where it says:

*Wherefore to sound intellects, and the rest.*

1<sup>o</sup>. I say then:

*Nor will they have it that a base man can become gentle,*

and here be it known that [20] it is the opinion of the erring ones that a man once a churl may never be called gentle; and a man who is son of a churl, in like manner may never be called gentle. And this shatters their own doctrine when they imply that time is required for nobleness, by inserting that word 'ancient'; for it is impossible in the process of time to come to the moment that begets nobleness, according to this their argument (that has been rehearsed), [30] which precludes a churl from being ever able to become gentle for ought that he may do or by any accident, and

precludes the passage from a churl father to a gentle son; for if the son of a churl is only a churl, then his son again is only the son of a churl, and therefore his son too is a churl; and so we shall never at all be able to find the point at which nobility begins by process of time. And if the adversary, bent on [40] making some defence, should say that nobility begins at the point of time when the base state of the ancestors is forgotten, I say that that is counter to them themselves; for of sheer necessity there would at that point be a transition from churlishness to gentleness, either of the same man from one into the other, or between father and son, which is contrary to what they lay down.

And if the adversary were stubbornly to defend his case by saying that they admit [50] that this change can take place when the base estate of the ancestors has fallen into oblivion, although the text takes no heed of this, it is right that the gloss should answer it. And therefore I answer thus, that from that contention of theirs follow four extreme absurdities, *i. ii. iii. iv.* so that the argument cannot be good.

The first is that the better human nature *i.* became the [60] harder and the slower would the generating of gentleness be, which is the greatest absurdity, inasmuch as a thing is the more mindful in proportion as it is better, and is a greater cause of good; and nobleness is counted amongst things that are good. And that this would be so is thus proved: If gentleness or nobleness (by which I mean one and the same thing) were generated by oblivion, nobleness would be the sooner generated in proportion as

The  
transition

Absurd results men were more [70] forgetful, for thereby all forgetfulness would come the quicker. Therefore the more forgetful men were the sooner would men become noble; and counterwise, the better memory they had the more slowly would they be ennobled.

- ii. The second is that this distinction between noble and base could not be made with respect to anything except men, which is highly absurd, inasmuch as [80] we recognise in every kind of thing the features of nobleness or baseness, so that we often speak of a noble horse and a base one, and a noble falcon and a base one, and a noble pearl and a base one. And that this distinction could not be made is thus proved: If oblivion of base ancestors is the cause of nobleness, then in cases where there has never been any baseness of ancestors there cannot be any oblivion of them [90] (inasmuch as oblivion is the perishing of memory), so that in these aforesaid animals other than man, and plants and minerals, baseness and loftiness cannot be traced, since their nature holds them to one only and equal state, and in their generation there can be no nobleness and so neither any baseness; inasmuch as these two are to be regarded as habit and privation, which are possibilities of one identical subject, and therefore in these things there can be [100] no distinction between one and the other. And if the adversary should choose to say that in other things nobleness means the excellence of the thing, but in men it means that the memory of their base condition has perished, one would wish to answer not with words but with a

dagger to such a stupidity as it would be to assign excellence as the cause of nobleness in other things, and oblivion as its principle in the case of [110] men. of a desperate contention

The third is that the thing generated would often come before the thing generating, which is utterly impossible; and this may be shown as follows: Let us suppose that Gherardo da Cammino had been the grandson of the basest churl that ever drank of the Sile or the Cagnano, and that oblivion of his grandfather had not yet come about; who should dare to say that Gherardo da Cammino would have been a base [120] man? And who would not agree with me and say that he was noble? Of a surety no one, howsoever presumptuous he might be; for noble he was, and so will his memory be for ever. And if oblivion of his base ancestor had not come about (as is urged in the objection), and he had been great in nobility, and his nobleness had been thus openly perceived, as openly perceived it is, it would have existed in him before that which generated it had come about. And this [130] is supremely impossible. iii.

The fourth is that a man should be held noble when dead who was not noble when alive, than which there can be no greater absurdity; and that this would follow is shown thus: Let us suppose that in the age of Dardanus the memory of his base ancestors survived, and let us suppose that in the age of Laomedon this memory had perished and oblivion had taken its place. According to the opinion we are attacking, [140] Laomedon was gentle and Dardanus was a churl when they were alive. iv.

A We, to whom the the memory of their ancestors dilemma (I mean beyond Dardanus) has not come down, are we to say that Dardanus was a churl when he was alive and is noble now that he is dead? And the report that Dardanus was the son of Jove is nothing counter to this, for it is a fable to which, in a philosophical discussion, we should give no heed. And, at anyrate, if the adversary [150] should choose to take his stand on the fable, verily, that which the fable veils destroys all his arguments. And thus it is manifest that the argument which laid down oblivion as the cause of nobleness is false and erroneous.

7. (ii.) See p. 276.

62, 70, 72. I think a careful study of the passage can leave little doubt that Dante means by *memorata* 'having a good memory,' and by *snemorati* 'having bad memories.' It would of course be more natural, on the face of it, to translate the words respectively 'held in memory' and 'forgotten.'

97. Neither nobility nor baseness has any meaning, except as applied to a subject capable of the habit or disposition in question, and therefore capable of the 'privation' of it. Compare II. 14 : 140, *note*.

107. Compare II. 9 : 56, *note*.

114. *Gherardo*. See *Purgatorio*, XVI. 124, and *note*. His death took place in 1306 (Toynbee), see Appendix, p. 421.

151. The insinuation is that if we are to lay stress on the legend we should conclude that Dardanus was base born and his parentage unknown. Compare *Paradiso*, VIII. 131 f.

## CHAPTER XV

[But (2<sup>o</sup>) this contention of theirs is itself absurd. For it would imply either (*i.*) that there is no distinction between noble and churl, or (*ii.*) that men have not all a common origin. And both of these are false. Wherefore the opinions of the emperor and of the common herd are alike refuted, save to such whose minds suffer from some one of three great sicknesses of soul, or are distraught by some defect or derangement of body reacting upon the mind.]

WHEN the ode has disproved, on their own teaching, that time is demanded for nobleness, it straightway goes on to confound their aforesaid teaching itself, so that no rust may be left by their false arguments upon the mind which is disposed to the truth; and this it does when it says:

Re-  
futation  
within  
refutation

*Further it followeth from what I have above set down.*

[10] And here be it known that if a man cannot become gentle from a churl, and neither can a gentle son be born from a base father (as was laid down above in their opinion), one of two absurdities must follow: the one is that *i. ii.* there is no nobleness; the other is that there have always been a multiplicity of men in the world, so that the human race is not descended from one single man. And this can be demonstrated. If nobleness is not [20] begotten *i.* anew (and it has been said above repeatedly that their opinion involves this, because it allows not its derivation from a base man to himself, nor

The origin of man from a base father to his son), a man is always such as he is born; and he is born such as his father; and so this transmission of one single condition has come down from the first parent; wherefore such as was the first generator, to wit, Adam, such must the whole human generation needs be, for [30] from him to the moderns there is no room to find any change according to this argument. Wherefore, if Adam himself was noble, we are all noble, and if he was base, we are all base, which is no other than to take away the distinction between these conditions, and so to take away the conditions themselves. And this is what the words

*That we be all gentle or else simple*

declare must follow from what has gone before.  
 ii. And if this be not true, then of sheer necessity some folk must be reckoned [40] noble and some reckoned base; and since the change from baseness to nobleness is ruled out, it follows that the human race is descended from divers origins, that is to say from one noble origin and from one base; and this is what the ode declares when it says:

*Or that man had not an origin,*

that is to say one sole origin (for it does not say 'origins'); and this is most false according to the Philosopher, according to our faith which may not [50] lie, according to the religion and ancient belief of the Gentiles; for although the Philosopher does not lay down the succession from one first man, yet he will have it that there is one only essence in all men, the which divers origins could not produce. And Plato



has it that all men depend on one only 'idea' and its unity not on several, which is giving one sole origin to them. And without doubt Aristotle would laugh aloud if he heard folk making two [60] species of the human race, like that of horses and of asses; for (with apologies to Aristotle) those who so think might at anyrate be considered the asses. That, judged by our faith (which is to be preserved absolutely), it would be most false, is clear from Solomon, who, when he makes a distinction between all mankind and the brute animals, calls all the former sons of Adam; and this he does when he says: 'Who knows whether the spirits of the sons [70] of Adam go up and those of the beasts go down?' And that it was false according to the Gentiles, behold the witness of Ovid in the first of his *Metamorphoses*, where he treats of the constitution of the world, according to the pagan belief, or that of the Gentiles, saying: 'Man was born (he does not say men); man was born; whether the artificer of things made him of divine seed, or whether the new-made earth, but [80] lately parted from the noble ether, retained the seeds of the kindred heaven which, mingled with the water of the stream, the son of Iapetus (that is Prometheus) composed in the likeness of the gods who govern all.' Where he manifestly lays it down that the first man was only one; and therefore the ode says:

*But this I grant not;*

that is that man had not an origin. And the ode adds:

*Neither do they if they [90] be Christians.*

Sound intellects 'Gentiles,' though their opinions too are against them; because the Christian doctrine is of greater vigour and crushes all cavil, thanks to the supreme light of heaven which illuminates it.

Then when I say :

*Wherefore to sound intellects 'tis manifest  
that what they say is vain,*

I draw the conclusion that their error is confounded; [100] and I say that it is time for eyes to be opened to the truth. And this I tell when I say :

*And now I would declare how I regard it.*

I affirm, then, that it is plain to 'sound intellects' by what has been said, that these utterances of theirs are vain, that is to say without the marrow of truth. And I say 'sound' not without cause. Wherefore be it known that our intellect may be spoken of as sound or sick; and I mean by 'intellect' the noble part of our [110] soul which may be indicated by the common term 'mind.' Sound it may be called when not impeded in its activity by ill either of mind or of body; which activity consists in knowing what things are, as Aristotle says in the third *Of the Soul*.

For, as to sickness of soul, I have perceived three terrible maladies in the mind of man. One is caused by boastfulness of [120] nature, for many are so presumptuous that they suppose themselves to know everything; and therefore they affirm uncertain things as certain; the which vice Tully chiefly denounces in the first of the *Offices*, and Thomas in his *Against the*

*Gentiles*, where he says: ‘Many are so pre- and sick sumptuous in character as to believe they can measure all things with their intellect, considering everything true that approves itself to them, and everything false [130] which does not.’ And hence it is that they never come at learning, believing that they are learned enough of themselves; they never ask questions, they never listen, but desire that questions should be asked of them, and before the question is well out they give a wrong answer. And of these Solomon says in the *Proverbs*: ‘Hast thou seen a man swift to answer? From him folly rather than correction is to be looked for.’ The second is caused by [140] abjectness of nature, for there are many so obstinate in their abasement that they cannot believe that anything can be known either by themselves or by any other; and such never search or argue for themselves, nor care at all what any other says. And against them Aristotle discourses in the first of the *Ethics*, saying ‘That they are incompetent students of moral philosophy.’ Ever like beasts do such [150] live in grossness, without hope of any instruction. The third is caused by frivolity of nature, for there are many of such frivolous fancy that they dash about whenever they argue, reaching their conclusion before they have formed their syllogism, and flying from this conclusion to another, and fancying all the time that they are arguing most subtly. And they start from no axioms and never really see any one thing truly in their imagination. And of [160] them the Philosopher says that we should take no heed nor have aught to do with them,

Souls saying in the first of the *Physics* that with him who denies the axioms it is not meet to dispute. And amongst such are many unlettered who would not know their A B C, and would fain discuss geometry, astrology and physics.

sick  
through  
the body

And by reason of sickness or defect of body the mind may be unsound, [170] sometimes by defect of some principle from birth, as in the case of idiots; sometimes by disturbance of the brain, as in the case of maniacs. And it is this malady of mind that the law contemplates when the *Infortiatum* says: 'In him who makes a testament, soundness of mind, not of body, is required at the time in which the testament is made.' Wherefore it is to those intellects which are not sick [180] by malady of mind or body, but are free and unencumbered and sound with reference to the light of truth, that I say it is manifest that the opinion just spoken of is vain and without worth.

Then it adds that I thus pronounce them false and vain and thus refute them; and this it does when it says:

*And thus do I refute the same as false.*

And afterwards I say that we are to proceed to demonstrate the truth, and I say that we are to demonstrate this, to wit what gentleness [190] is, and how a man in whom it exists may be recognised; and I say this here:

*And now I would declare how I regard it.*

117-183. With this whole passage compare I. 11.

175. 'The *Digestum Vetus* extends from the beginning

to the end of Lib. XXIV. tit. ii., the *Infortiatum* thence to the end of Lib. XXXVIII. tit. iii., the rest of the Pandects being the *Digestum Novum* (Rashdall). The derivation of the term *Infortiatum* is not known.

## CHAPTER XVI

[(*b*) Proceeding now to the positive part of his task the author promises ( $\alpha$ ) to show us the nature of nobleness, and ( $\beta$ ) to enumerate its tokens; and under ( $\alpha$ ) he will (i.) clear the ground by (1°) examining the use and derivation of the word 'noble,' and by (2°) determining the method by which we must seek to define it, and then (ii.) will attempt the definition itself.]

'THE king shall rejoice in God, and all those who swear by him shall be praised, because the mouth is shut of those who speak unjust things.' Rejoicing  
in the  
truth  
These words I may verily here set forth, because every true king ought supremely to love the truth. Wherefore it is written in the book of *Wisdom*: 'Love the light of wisdom, ye who are before the [10] peoples'; and the light of wisdom is truth itself. I say, then, that every king shall rejoice because that most false and pernicious opinion of mischievous and erring men, which they have hitherto unrighteously spoken concerning nobleness, has been refuted.

It is fitting to proceed to treat of the truth *b*. according to the division made above in the third chapter of the present treatise. This second part, then, which [20] begins:

*I affirm that every virtue in principle,*

purposes to determine about nobleness itself

Nobleness is perfection according to the truth. And this part is divided into two; for in the first the intention is to show what this nobleness is, and in the second how he in whom it resides may be recognised. And this second part begins:

*The soul which this excellence adorns.*

- a. The first part has again two parts, for in the first certain things are investigated which [30] are necessary for the comprehension of the definition of nobleness. In the second the definition itself is sought; and this second part begins:

*Gentlehood is wherever there is virtue.*

- i. To penetrate completely into the treatment  
 1<sup>o</sup>, 2<sup>o</sup>. we must first perceive two things: The one, what is understood by this word *nobleness*, simply considered without qualification; the other is, by what road we are to travel to find  
 1<sup>o</sup>. the above-named definition. I say, then, [40] that if we would have regard to the common custom of speech, this word 'nobleness' means the perfection in each thing of its proper nature. Wherefore it is not only predicated of man, but of all other things as well; for a man calls a stone noble, a plant noble, a horse noble, a falcon noble, whenever it appears perfect in its own nature. And therefore Solomon says in *Ecclesiastes*: 'Blessed [50] the land whose king is noble,' which is to say no other than 'whose king is perfect according to the perfection of mind and of body.' And this he clearly shows by what he says before, when he says: 'Woe unto thee, O land, whose king is a child,'

that is to say, not a perfect man ; and a man is not a child simply in virtue of age, but in virtue of disorderly ways and defect of life, as the Philosopher instructs us in the first of the *Ethics*. It is true that [60] there are foolish ones who believe that by this word 'noble' is meant 'named and known by many,' and they say that it comes from a verb which means 'to know,' to wit *nosco*. And this is most false ; for if this were so, those things which were most named and known in their kind would be noblest in their kind ; and so the obelisk of St. Peter would be the most noble stone in the world ; and [70] Asdente the cobbler of Parma would be nobler than any of his fellow-citizens ; and Alboino della Scala would be more noble than Guido da Castello of Reggio ; whereas every one of these things is most false. And therefore it is most false that *noble* comes from *knowing* ; but it comes from *not vile*, wherefore 'noble' is as much as 'not vile.' This perfection is what the Philosopher himself means in the seventh of the *Physics* when he says : 'Everything is most [80] perfect when it touches and reaches its own proper virtue ; and it is then most perfect according to its nature. Wherefore the circle may be called perfect when it is really a circle ;' that is to say, when it attains to its own proper virtue, then it exists in its full nature, and then it may be called a noble circle. And this is when there is a point in it which is equally distant from the circumference. That circle [90] which has the figure of an egg loses its virtue and is not noble ; nor is that which has the figure of an

Deriva  
tion of  
the word



Mode of definition almost full moon, because its nature is not perfect in it. And so it may be plainly seen that in general this word, to wit 'nobleness,' expresses in all things the perfection of their nature. And this is the first thing we were in search of, the better to enter into the treatment of the section 2<sup>o</sup>. which we are about to expound. Secondly, [100] we were to see how we are to travel in order to discover the definition of human nobleness, which is the scope of the present process. I say, then, that inasmuch as in those things which are of one species, as are all men, we cannot define their best perfection by essential principles, we must define and know it by the effects they manifest; and so we read in the Gospel of [110] St. Matthew when Christ says: 'Beware of false prophets; by their fruits ye shall know them.' So the straight path leads us to look for this definition (which we are searching for) by way of the fruits; which are moral and intellectual virtues whereof this our nobleness is the seed, as shall be fully shown in the definition thereof. And these are the two things which it behoved us to perceive before [120] proceeding to the rest, as said above in this chapter.

16. (b) See p. 238.

68. Brought from Egypt in the reign of Caligula, and placed in the Circus of Nero; on the foundations of which the old St. Peter's was built, under Constantine. The obelisk was removed to the neighbouring site it now occupies in 1586 by Sixtus V. (Murray.)

69. On the fate of Asdente, no longer famous, see *Inferno*, XX. 118-120. Alboino della Scala, the brother of Dante's subsequent friend and patron, Can Grande, was lord of Verona from 1304 to 1311. Dante may have

met him and conceived his contempt for him in the court of his brother Bartolomeo. Compare *Paradiso*, XVII. 70-72. Guido da Castello is coupled with Gherardo da Cammino in *Purgatorio*, XVI. 124-126.

76. I have generally translated *vile* 'base,' but here the play upon the word (such as it is) requires 'vile.'

106. An essential principle, that makes a thing what it is, being common to all things of the same kind, cannot serve to define the distinguishing excellences of the better individuals of that kind. Compare IV. 10 : 54-65, where a somewhat different reason for defining by effects is given.

108. The effects which 'they,' the individuals, manifest.

## CHAPTER XVII

[(ii.) Approaching his definition, the author (1°), by way of preliminary discussion, insists (*i.*) that all virtues have one common principle—that of being the mean between two opposing vices; and (*ii.*) that the present definition and investigation are limited to the moral virtues, which concern the active life; reason being shewn why the intellectual virtues and the contemplative life are not considered here.]

Now when these two things are understood which it seemed advantageous to understand before proceeding with the text, we are to go on to expound the text itself. It says, then, and begins : 1°, 2°.

*I affirm that every virtue in principle cometh from one root, I mean virtue that maketh man blessed in his doing ;*

and it adds :

*This is (according as the Ethics say) a selective habit,*

The root of virtues ii.

The [10] setting forth the whole definition of moral virtues according as it is defined in the second of the *Ethics* by the Philosopher ; and the chief stress of this is on two things : the one is that every  
 1<sup>o</sup>.  
 i. ii<sup>o</sup> virtue comes from one principle ; the other is that this ‘every virtue’ means the moral virtues which are our subject ; and this is manifest when it says :

*That is (according as the Ethics say).*

Where be it known that our most proper fruits are the moral [20] virtues, because in every direction they are in our power. And they have been distinguished and enumerated diversely by divers philosophers, but inasmuch as wherever the divine opinion of Aristotle has opened its mouth, methinks that every other’s opinion may be dropped, purposing to declare what they are I will briefly pass through them in discourse according to his opinion. These are the eleven virtues named by the said philosopher.

[30] The first is called courage, which is weapon and rein to control rashness and timidity in things which bring destruction to our life.

The second is temperance, which is rule and rein to our gluttony and our excessive abstinence in things which preserve our life.

The third is liberality, which is the moderator of our giving and of our [40] taking of temporal things.

The fourth is munificence, which is the moderator of great expenditures, making the same and arresting them at a certain limit.

The fifth is consciousness of greatness,

which is moderator and acquirer of great honours and fame. Virtues  
and vices

The sixth is proper pride, which moderates and regulates us as to the honours of this world.

[50] The seventh is serenity, which moderates our wrath and our excessive patience in the face of external evils.

The eighth is affability, which makes us pleasant in company.

The ninth is called frankness, which moderates us in speech from vaunting ourselves beyond what we are, or depreciating ourselves beyond what we are.

The tenth is called *eutrapelia*, which [60] moderates us in sports, causing us to ply them in due measure.

The eleventh is justice, which disposes us to love and to do righteousness in all things.

And each of these virtues has two collateral foes, namely vices, the one in excess and the other in defect. And they themselves are the means between them; and they all spring from one principle, to wit from the habit of our right [70] selection. Wherefore it may be said generally of all of them that they are an 'elective habit consisting in the mean.' And these are they which make a man blessed or happy in their operation, as saith the Philosopher in the first of the *Ethics*, when he defines felicity, saying that 'felicity is action in accordance with virtue in a perfect life.' It is true that prudence, or sense, is set down by many as a moral virtue; but Aristotle [80] enumerates her amongst the intellectual virtues, although she is the guide of the moral virtues and shows the way whereby

The they are combined, and without her they may  
active life not be.

and the  
contem-  
plative

But, be it known, in this life we may have two felicities, according to the two diverse paths, the good and the best, which lead us thereto; the one is the active life, and the other the contemplative. Which [90] latter (although by the active life we arrive, as was said, at a good felicity) leads us to the best felicity and blessedness, as the Philosopher proves in the tenth of the *Ethics*. And Christ affirms it with his mouth in the Gospel of Luke, speaking to Martha, and answering her: 'Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and dost trouble thyself about many things; verily one only thing is needful;' that is to say, the thing which thou art doing. And he [100] adds: 'Mary hath chosen the best part, which shall not be taken from her.' And Mary, as is written before these words of the Gospel, sitting at the feet of Christ, showed no concern for the ministry of the house, but hearkened only to the words of the Saviour. For if we would expound this morally, our Lord meant therein to show that the contemplative life was the best, although the active [110] life was good. This is manifest to whoso will apply his mind to the Gospel words. But some might say, arguing against me: Inasmuch as the felicity of the contemplative life is more excellent than that of the active, and the one and the other may be and is the fruit and end of nobility, why not proceed rather by way of the intellectual than by way of the moral virtues? To this it may be answered briefly that [120] in every discipline heed should be given to the capacity of the

learner, and he should be led by that path which is easiest to him. Wherefore, inasmuch as the moral virtues seem to be and are more common and better known and more sought after than the other virtues, and more closely knit with outward manifestation, it was expedient and suitable to proceed by this path rather than by the other; for we should arrive equally well at a knowledge of bees by investigating the product of [130] wax as the product of honey, though the one and the other proceed from them.

The  
moral  
virtues

The division 1<sup>o</sup>, 2<sup>o</sup>, is implied at the opening of Chapter XIX.

20. *In every direction.* Compare IV. 9 : 65-75.

41-47. *Magnificenza* (= 'munificence,') is liberality on a large scale. *Magnanimità* (Compare I. 11 : 126-144) is a sense of superiority in a man who really is superior. *Amativa d'onore* is the desire for adequate success, honour and recognition on the part of a man who has not, and does not think he has, marked greatness. Thus the relation of *magnanimità* to *amativa d'onore* is identical with that of *magnificenza* to *liberalità*.

59. *Eutrapelia* is ease and pleasantness in social intercourse and conversation. Thomas Aquinas gives an amusing description of the man who is always swooping, like a rapacious bird, on every remark, to make it the pretext for a pun, or the like. This is one of the vicious extremes. Haughty or morose aloofness is the other.

83. *Combined.* I.e., the proportions in which the opposing qualities, either of which in excess is a vice, are to be combined in order to produce virtue.

99. Dr Moore has shown that Augustine, like Dante, regarded Martha as receiving the qualified praise, rather than the rebuke, of Jesus. But the very curious interpretation of the 'one thing needful' as referring to her and not to Mary seems to be peculiar to Dante.

129. Though honey, which is what we think of *par excellence* as the product of the bees, yet there is no reason why we should not investigate them through the product

of wax (which, by the way, was of far higher importance in the middle ages than it is now) should it be more convenient to do so; and so we may investigate nobleness by means of the moral virtues, although the intellectual, which are more excellent, also proceed from it. See the first *note* on Chapter XXII. of this treatise.

## CHAPTER XVIII

[Having spoken of the moral virtues the author proceeds (*iii.*) to show that they have the characteristic of being praiseworthy in common with nobleness, which indicates some connection between the two; and, nobleness being the more comprehensive term, it seems reasonable to suppose (though it is not yet proved) that the moral virtues are derived from nobleness, rather than they and it from some common source.]

**Cause and effect** THE preceding chapter brings us to define how every moral virtue rises out of one principle, that is to say a right and habitual selection; and that is what the present text implies up to that part which begins:

*I affirm that nobility in its constituent essence.*

- iii.* In this part, then, we proceed, by way of probable inference, to learn that every virtue named above, taken severally [10] or generally, proceeds from nobility, as effect from cause. And this is supported by a philosophical proposition which declares that when two things are found to agree in anything they must both be reduced to some third thing, or one of them reduced to the other, as effect to cause; because one characteristic, primarily and essentially possessed, can only pertain to one thing, and if



these two were not both the effect of some third, [20] nor one the effect of the other, then both of them would possess this characteristic primarily and essentially, which is impossible. It says, then, that nobility and virtue (such as we are discussing, namely moral virtue) agree in this, that the one and the other implies praise in him of whom it is asserted, and this when it says :

*Wherefore in one same implication the two agree, being to one effect ;*

that is to say, the ascription of them to anyone implies praise of him and the belief that he is prized.

And then it draws the conclusion, on the strength [30] of the above-noted proposition, and says that the one must needs proceed from the other, or both from a third ; and adds that it is rather to be presumed that one comes from the other than that both come from a third, if it appears that the one implies as much as the other, and more yet ; and this is what this line affirms :

*But if one signifies all that the other signifies,*

where you are to know that at this point the argument does not proceed by necessary demonstration (as though we should [40] say : ‘ If it is cold that begets water, and if we see the clouds,’ etc.), but expresses a fair and fitting induction ; for if there are in us sundry things worthy of praise, and if there also is in us the principle whence praise of us flows, it is reasonable to reduce the former to the latter. And it is more reasonable to regard that which embraces several things as their principle than to

Virtue  
derived  
from  
nobleness

The preparation complete regard them as its principle. For the stem of the tree, which embraces all the other limbs, should [50] be called the principle and cause of them, and not they of it. And thus nobleness, which comprehends every virtue (as cause comprehends effect), and many other praiseworthy activities of ours as well, ought so to be so regarded as that virtue should be reduced to it, rather than to some third thing that may be in us.

Finally, it says that what has now been expressed (to wit that every moral virtue comes from [60] one root, and moral virtue as above declared, agrees in one thing with nobility, so that the one must be reduced to the other or both to a third, and that if the one means all that which the other does and more, the latter proceeds from the former rather than from some other third) is all to be presupposed; that is to say, is ordered and prepared for what is further in view. And so ends this verse and this [70] present section.

8. Dante appears here to use the word *probabile* in contradistinction to *demonstrativa*.

17. *Primarily and essentially*, i.e., not incidentally. The idea is that all things which are praiseworthy essentially, and not owing to some incidental circumstance or condition, must have in them the common principle (whatever it may be) from which praise springs.

An illustration may explain the distinction between having a characteristic primarily and secondarily. 'Movement through space' being characteristic of 'body,' nothing which moves through space primarily can be other than corporeal. Now, the *soul* or *life* becomes incidentally, and in a secondary sense, capable of being moved through space, by its union with the body, but it is not therefore corporeal; for it does not possess the capacity for movement through space primarily and essentially.

40. The text leaves the phrase incomplete. 'If it is cold that begets moisture, and we see clouds in the air, we know that the air in that region is cold.' The present argument is not of this conclusive nature.

45. The argument is: Seeing that the principle of praiseworthiness must be something in ourselves, and seeing that there are a variety of praiseworthy things in us, we must obviously attempt to discover that principle and to bring all its manifestations under it. Now in making this attempt we shall be more likely to succeed if we take the more comprehensively praiseworthy manifestations as our basis than if we take the less comprehensively praiseworthy ones.

## CHAPTER XIX

[The author now proceeds (2°) directly to his task of examining nobleness, and (i.) converts what was previously (1°, iii.) only a probable inference into a certainty, by showing more precisely that moral virtue invariably implies nobleness, but nobleness does not invariably imply moral virtue.]

Now that in the preceding section three certain **Further** things have been decided, which were necessary **division** in order to learn how we might define this excellent thing of which we are speaking, it behoves us to proceed to the following section, 2°, which begins:

*Gentlehood is wherever there is virtue.*

And this must be reduced to two sections. In *i. ii.* the first a certain thing is proved which was touched upon, but left [10] unproved, before. In the second the conclusion is reached, and that definition which we are seeking is found. And this second part begins:

Fuller *Therefore shall be evolved (like perse from*  
 proof *black).*

- i. To make the first section evident we are to recall what was said above, that if nobleness has a larger scope and extent than virtue, virtue will rather proceed from it. Which thing, to wit that nobility [20] has a wider extent, is proved in this section; and it gives an illustration from the heaven, saying that wherever virtue is there is nobleness. And here be it known that (according as is written in Reason and is held as the rule of Reason) those things which are obvious in themselves have no need of proof; and nothing is more obvious than that there is nobleness where there is virtue. And it is a matter of common observation that everything after its own nature can be [30] called noble. It says then:

*Even as the heaven is wherever is the star,*

but this is not true conversely (viz., that wherever the heaven is there the star is also), just so there is nobleness wherever there is virtue, but not virtue wherever there is nobleness. And this with a fair and congruous illustration; for in truth it is a heaven in which many and divers stars shine; the intellectual and the moral virtues shine in it; good dispositions [40] given by nature shine in it, to wit tenderness and religion, and the praiseworthy emotions, to wit shame and compassion, and many others. There shine in it the excellencies of the body, to wit beauty, strength, and, so to speak, unbroken health; and so many are the stars that extend over this

heaven that verily it is no matter for wonder if they make many and divers fruits grow on human nobleness, so many are their natural characteristics and potentialities, comprised and united in one [50] simple substance; and in them, as in divers branches, it bears divers fruits. Nay, in very truth I dare to affirm that human nobleness considered under the aspect of its many fruits surpasses that of the angel, although the angelic be more divine in its unity. Of this our nobleness, which fructifies in such and in so many fruits, the psalmist was aware when he composed that psalm which [60] begins: 'O Lord our God, how wonderful is thy name throughout the earth!' where he extols man, as though marvelling at the divine affection for the human creature, saying: 'What is man that thou, God, visitest him? Thou hast made him but little less than the angels; with glory and with honour hast thou crowned him, and set him over the works of thy hands.' Verily then it was a beauteous and congruous [70] comparison of the heaven to human nobleness!

of the derivation of virtue

Then when it says:

*And we in women and in youthful age,*

it proves that which I say, showing that nobleness extends itself into a region where virtue does not. And it says that we

*Perceive this saving thing*

(which refers to nobleness, which is indeed a truly saving thing) to exist where there is sensitiveness to shame, that is, fear of dishonour; as in women and in young folk, where shame is

from good and laudable ; which shame [80] is not a nobleness virtue but a certain estimable emotion. And it says :

*And we in women and in youthful age,*

that is in young people ; because, according as the Philosopher hath it in the fourth of the *Ethics*, ‘ Shame is not laudable nor becoming in old men nor in studious folk,’ because it behoves them to guard against those things which would cause them shame. Of young people and of women not so much of this line of conduct is required, and therefore in [90] them the fear of encountering disgrace through some fault is laudable, for it comes from nobleness. And their fear may be regarded as nobleness, just as impudence is baseness and ignobleness. Wherefore it is a good and most excellent sign of nobleness in children and those of unripe age when shame is painted in their faces after a fault, for then it is the fruit of true nobleness.

30-32. Compare II. 7 : 95 ff.

36. *It*, namely nobility.

44-52. Compare *Paradiso*, II. 115-117.

50. It is only metaphorically that nobleness is a ‘ substance’ at all. Compare III. 11 : 130-136, *note*. For the unity of all the stars in heaven, see *Paradiso*, II. 130-138.

55. Compare III. 7 : 69 ff.

58. Observe the conscious intellectual processes assumed, and compare *Paradiso*, XX. 40-42.

85. *Studious folk*. I have so translated *uomini studiosi*, (though with much hesitation), because I think Dante understood it so. In the Latin, however, *studiosus* is a translation of *ἐπιεικής*, which means ‘ men of weight and character.’

94-98. Hence the *veleno* of Beatrice’s insistence on Dante’s full manhood in *Purgatorio*, XXXI. 67 ff.

## CHAPTER XX

[The author comes (*ii.*) to the long-sought definition-by-effect itself. We have seen that virtue is a necessary outcome of nobleness. Therefore, no man can be ennobled by his family if he have not personally the godlike grace which indicates nobleness. It is the gift of God alone to such a soul as, having a rightly-disposed body to harbour it, has taken a perfect stand therein. To such, nobility is 'the seed of blessedness dropped by God into a rightly-placed soul,' and this definition, though implying throughout the defining effects and not attempting an analysis (see Chapter X.), yet actually embraces all four causes of nobleness.]

WHEN there follows next :

Virtue  
and  
nobleness

*Therefore shall be evolved (as perse from black),*

the text proceeds to that definition of nobility *ii.* which we are seeking, and whereby we may perceive what this nobleness of which so many folk speak erroneously really is. It affirms then, drawing the conclusion from what has already been said, that every virtue,

*or their generic kind,*

namely the 'elective habit consisting in the [10] mean,' will proceed from this, to wit from nobleness. And it takes an illustration from the colours, saying that as perse derives from black, so does it, namely virtue, derive from nobleness. Perse is a colour mingled of purple and of black, but the black predominates, and it is called after it; and thus virtue is a thing combined of nobleness and emotion; but because



**Grace** the nobleness predominates over the other, virtue  
**God-** is called after it and is named goodness.  
**given**

[20] And so it goes on to argue from what has been said, that no one, because he can say 'I am of such and such a race,' should believe that he has nobleness, unless these fruits are in him. And straightway it gives the reason, saying that those who have this 'grace,' to wit this divine thing, are almost like gods, without taint of vice. And this gift can be given by none save God alone, with whom there is no selection of persons, as the divine [30] scriptures make manifest. Nor let any deem it too lofty an utterance when it says :

*For they are well-nigh gods;*

for, as argued above in the seventh chapter of the third treatise, just as there are men most base and bestial, so there are men most noble and divine. And Aristotle proves this in the seventh of the *Ethics*, by the text of the poet Homer. Wherefore let not him of the Uberti of Florence, nor him of the Visconti of Milan, say : [40] ' Because I am of such a race I am noble ; ' for the divine seed falls not upon the race, that is the stock, but falls upon the several persons ; and, as will be shown below, the stock does not ennoble the several persons, but the several persons ennoble the stock.

Then when it says :

*For God alone presents it to the soul,*

the discourse turns to the receptive being, that is the subject, whereon this divine [50] gift

descends—for it is in truth a divine gift—accord-  
 ing to the word of the apostle: ‘Every best  
 gift and every perfect gift cometh from above,  
 descending from the Father of lights.’ It says  
 then that God alone gives this grace to the soul  
 of that man whom he sees perfectly balanced in  
 his person and ready and disposed to receive  
 this divine act. For, as the Philosopher says  
 in the second *Of the Soul*: ‘Things must needs  
 be [60] in the right disposition for their agents  
 in order to be acted on by them.’ Wherefore  
 if the soul takes not its perfect ‘stand,’ it is  
 not so disposed as to receive this blessed and  
 divine infusion; just as if a precious stone be  
 ill-disposed, or imperfect, it cannot receive the  
 celestial virtue, as said that noble Guido Guini-  
 zelli in an ode of his which begins: ‘To the  
 gentle heart love repaireth ever.’ It is possible,  
 then, [70] that the soul stands not well in the  
 person through defect of complexion, and perhaps  
 through defect of season; and in such as these this  
 divine ray never glows. And such, whose soul  
 is deprived of this light, may say that they are  
 like valleys turned to the north, or caves beneath  
 the earth, where the light of the sun never  
 descends unless thrown back from some other  
 region whereon it shines.

[80] Finally it draws the conclusion and  
 declares according to what has been said above  
 (namely that the virtues are the fruit of noble-  
 ness, which God implants in the mind that sits  
 rightly), that there are some (namely, those who  
 have understanding, which are few), to whom

*the seed of blessedness draws nigh.*

Souls in  
 darkness

The And it is evident that human nobleness is nought definition else than,

*the seed of blessedness draws nigh      de-  
spatched by God into the well-placed soul,*

that is, the soul whose body is perfectly disposed [90] in every part. For if the virtues are the fruit of nobleness and if blessedness is the fruition of sweetness, it is manifest that this nobleness is the sower of blessedness, as has been said; and if well considered, this definition embraces all the four causes, to wit, material, formal, efficient and final; material, inasmuch as it says 'into the well-placed soul,' which is the material and subject of nobleness; formal, inasmuch as it says that it is [100] 'the seed'; efficient, inasmuch as it says 'despatched by God into the soul'; final, inasmuch as it says 'of blessedness.' And thus is defined this excellence of ours, which descends into us from a supreme and spiritual virtue, like as virtue into the stone from noblest celestial body.

17. I have not ventured to disturb the text, but since virtue is a habit or disposition, not a passion or emotion, and since Dante expressly insists (see line 80 of the previous chapter) that shame, being a passion, is not a virtue (compare Aristotle's *Sunt autem et in passionibus . . . medietates. Verecundia enim virtus quidem non est*, etc., in *Ethics*, II. vii.: 14), it would seem that we ought to substitute some such word as *elezione* for *passione*.

Compare with this whole description the passage about gallantry in *Ode xi.* 68-105.

19. *Goodness*, the Italian is *bontà*, which I have elsewhere translated 'excellence.'

37. The passage had impressed Dante in early days. See *Vita Nuova*, § 2, 51 f.

41-43. Compare *Paradiso*, VIII. 127-129 *As will*

be shown below, viz., at the end of Chapter XXIX. of this treatise.

62. If the body is not as it should be the soul is not rightly 'placed' in it.

71, 72. Consult the following chapter.

90-93. Since blessedness consists in the fruition of delectable things, and the virtues secure that fruition, and nobleness produces the virtues, nobleness is the seed of blessedness.

94 ff. The material cause, say of a ploughshare, is the iron out of which it is made. Its formal cause is the shape which makes it a ploughshare and not something else. Its efficient causes are the fire, the strokes of the smith, and so forth, which cause it to come into existence. And its final cause is the end or purpose (viz., turning the furrow) the contemplation of which was the motive for producing it. All four causes of nobility Dante says are included in the definition. Compare III. II : 150, text and *note*.

## CHAPTER XXI

[A further examination of the way in which nobility descends upon man ; (A) as revealed by natural science ; (B) as revealed by theology. (A) The impregnating seed differs (1°) in its elemental composition, (2°) in the generative virtue of the begetter, and (3°) in the celestial influences that dominate the critical moment ; (which differences severally produce corresponding differences (1°) in the way in which the receptive ovum is physically prepared to submit to the action of the generative virtue ; (2°) in the way in which that generative virtue acts in articulating the foetus ; (3°) in the way in which the celestial virtue draws into actuality the potential life-principle contained in the seed). Then by special divine act (4°) the intellectual principle, involving the power of abstract thought, is superinduced. And in measure as all these processes and conditions are perfect (5°) divine

excellences are multiplied in the soul. (B) Theological science enables us to add that these excellences are the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and to rehearse them severally. An epilogue on spiritual appetite and its cultivation.]

**Human souls** IN order to understand the human excellence which is called nobleness, as the principle of all good in us, we are to elucidate, in this special chapter, how this excellence descends [A, B. into us; and first in the natural way, and then in the theological, that is, the divine [A. and spiritual way. To begin with, we are to know that man is composed [10] of soul and of body; but that which has been declared to resemble the seed of the divine virtue pertains to the soul. It is true that divers reasonings have been held by philosophers concerning the difference of our souls; for Avicenna and Algazel would have it that they in themselves, and in their principle, were noble or base. Plato and others would have it that they proceeded from the stars and were noble, more or less, according to the nobleness of the star. [20] Pythagoras would have it that all were of like nobleness, and not only the human souls, but together with the human those of the brute animals and of the plants, and the forms of the minerals; and he said that all the difference was in the bodily forms. If each were to defend his own opinion, it might be that truth would be seen to exist in all of them. But inasmuch as on the surface they appear somewhat remote from the truth, it is better not [30] to proceed by way of them, but by way of the opinion of Aristotle and of the Peripatetics. And therefore I say that

when the human seed falls into its receptacle, that is, into the matrix, it bears with it the virtue of the generative soul, and the virtue of heaven, and the virtue of the elements it combines, that is to say, its complexion; and it matures and disposes the material for the formative virtue which the soul of the generator gave. And the formative virtue prepares [40] the organs for the celestial virtue which draws the soul from the potentiality of the seed into life. And the moment it is produced it receives from the virtue of the mover of the heaven the possible intellect, which potentially brings in itself all the universal forms, according as they exist in its Producer, but in a lesser degree in proportion as it is more removed from the prime Intelligence.

Let no man marvel if I speak in such wise [50] as seems hard to understand; for to me myself it seems a marvel how such a producing can be arrived at by argument and perceived by the intellect; and it is not a thing to expound in language—I mean in any language truly vernacular. Wherefore I would say like the apostle: ‘Oh, height of the wealth of the wisdom of God, how incomprehensible are thy judgments, and thy ways past finding out!’ And because the complexion of the seed may [60] be more or less good, and the disposition of the sower may be more or less good, and the disposition of the heaven for the effect may be good, better or best (since it varies by reason of the constellations which are continually changing), it comes to pass that from the human seed, and from these virtues, the soul is produced more or

Why they  
differ



The seed less pure. And according to its purity there of felicity descends into it the [70] possible intellectual virtue, which has been spoken of, and in the way spoken of. And if it chance that because of the purity of the receiving soul the intellectual virtue is well abstracted and absolved from every corporeal shade, the divine excellence is multiplied in it, as in a thing sufficient for its reception; and hence there is multiplication of this intelligence in the soul according as it may receive it. And this is that 'seed of felicity' of which at present we are speaking.

[80] And this harmonizes with the opinion of Tully in that of *Old Age*, where, speaking in the person of Cato, he says: 'Wherefore a celestial soul descended into us, coming down from the loftiest of habitations into a place which is counter to the divine nature and to eternity.' And in this such soul there exists its own proper virtue, and the intellectual virtue, and the divine, to wit, that influence of which we have just been speaking; wherefore it is written in the book *Of* [90] *Causes*: 'Every noble soul has three activities, to wit the animal, the intellectual, and the divine.' And there are some of such opinion as to say that if all the preceding virtues were to accord in the production of a soul in their best disposition, that so much of the Deity would descend thereon that it would almost be another incarnate God; and this is almost all that can be said by way of natural science.

[B. [100] By way of theological science it may be said that when the supreme Deity, that is God, sees his creature prepared to receive of



his benefaction, he commits to it as largely thereof as it is prepared to receive. And because these gifts come from ineffable love, and the divine love is appropriated to the Holy Spirit, they are thence called gifts of the Holy Spirit. The which, as Isaiah the Prophet [110] distinguishes them, are seven, to wit, wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, knowledge, piety, and fear of God. Oh fair grain, and fair and marvellous seed! and oh admirable and benign sower, who waitest only until human nature prepare the land for thee to sow! Oh blessed they who fittingly cultivate such seed! And here, be it known, that the first and noble shoot which sprouts from this seed [120] to bear fruit, is mental appetite, which in Greek is called *hormen*. And if this be not well cultivated and kept straight by good habit, little avails the seed, and better would it be had it not been sown at all. And therefore St. Augustine lays it down (and also Aristotle in the second of the *Ethics*) that man should accustom himself to well-doing and to restraining his passions, in order that this shoot that has been spoken of may [130] grow strong by good habit and may be inured in its straightness, so that it may bear fruit, and from its fruit may issue the sweetness of human felicity.

Gifts of  
the spirit

17. Compare *Paradiso*, IV. 24, note.

25. *Bodily forms*. 'Form' is not here used in its philosophical sense, Lat, as it would be in modern writing, for 'shape.'

42. *It*, i.e., the soul.

54. I suppose Dante means 'language which should really be vernacular,' that is, suited to convey his meaning

to the unlettered. The mere Italianising of the technical terms of the schools would not be real vernacular.

86-91. As to the terminology of this passage, which does not quite agree with what has gone before, consult *note* on III. 2: 27.

95-99. This singularly bold attempt to bring the incarnation within the range of natural sequences seems almost to anticipate certain speculations of modern theologians. It is strange that (so far as I know) it has not been fastened on by any of those scholars who have sought to make Dante, especially when he wrote the *Convivio*, something of a heretic.

124. Compare *Purgatorio*, XXX. 109-120.

## CHAPTER XXII

[Of the goal of human life and the progress of the soul towards it. Of love of self in general, and of the highest or intellectual self in particular. Of the practical and the speculative intellect and the blessedness which each may attain. Of the greater blessedness to be attained by the speculative life. Of the allegory of the three Marys at the tomb. Of the imperfect blessedness of earth and the perfect blessedness of heaven.]

**Of giving good gifts** IT is enjoined by the moral philosophers who have spoken of benefactions that man ought to bestow thought and care on making the benefits he confers as useful as may be to the receiver. Wherefore I, desiring to be obedient to such command, purpose to render this my banquet in every one of its parts as useful as shall be possible to me. And since [10] it here occurs to me that there is place for some discourse of the sweetness of human felicity, I conceive that no more useful discourse can be made for those who

know it not; for (as saith the Philosopher in the *Mental* first of the *Ethics*, and Tully in that of the *Goal* *appetite* of *Good*) he makes ill progress towards the goal who does not see it. And in like manner he can advance but ill towards this sweetness who is not first aware of what it is. Wherefore, inasmuch as it [20] is our final solace, for which we live and accomplish whatsoever we do, it is most useful and necessary to perceive this goal in order to direct the bow of our activity towards it. And he is chiefly acceptable who points it out to those who see it not.

Letting be, then, the opinion on this matter which the philosopher Epicurus had, and that which Zeno had, I purpose to come at [30] once to the true opinion of Aristotle and of the other Peripatetics. As said above, from the divine excellence sown and infused into us from the beginning of our generation there springs a shoot which the Greeks call *hormen*, that is, natural appetite of the mind. And as the grains which, when born, have at first an almost identical appearance while yet in the blade, and then, as they go [40] forward, become unlike, so this natural appetite, which rises from the divine grace, at first appears not unlike that which comes just from nature, stripped of aught else, and (like the blade of divers grains) is almost identical with it. And this likeness is not confined to men, but extends to men and to beasts alike. And this appears herein that every animal, as soon as it is born, whether rational or brute, [50] loves itself and fears and flees those things which are counter to it, and hates them. Then, as things proceed, there begins, as said

**Distinc-  
tions in  
self-love** above, to be unlikeness between them in the progress of this appetite, for one takes one path and another another. As saith the apostle: 'Many run for the prize, but one is he who receives it,' so these human appetites proceed from their starting-point along divers paths, [60] and one only path is that which leads us to our peace. And therefore letting be all the others, our treatise is to hold after the one that begins aright.

I say, then, that from the beginning it loves itself, although without discrimination. Then it comes to distinguish the things which are most pleasant, and less and more detestable, and follows and flees in greater and less degree according as its consciousness distinguishes not [70] only in other things which it loves secondarily, but just in itself which it loves primarily. And recognising in itself divers parts, it loves those in itself most which are most noble. And since the mind is a more noble part of man than the body, it loves that more; and thus, loving itself primarily and other things for its own sake, and loving the better part of itself better, it is clear that it loves the mind [80] better than the body or aught else; which mind it ought by nature to love more than aught else. Wherefore if the mind always delights in the exercise of the thing it loves (which is the fruition of love), exercise in that thing which it loves most is the most delightful. The exercise of our mind then is most delightful to us; and that which is most delightful to us constitutes our felicity and our blessedness, [90] beyond which there is no delight, nor any equal to it, as may be seen by whoso well considers the preceding argument.

And let not any say that every appetite is mental, for here mind is taken only to mean that which has respect to the rational part, that is, the will and the intellect. So that if anyone should choose to call the sensitive appetite mind, his objection would not and could not apply to the present matter; for none doubts that the [100] rational appetite is more noble than the sensitive and therefore more to be loved; and so that is the thing of which we are now speaking.

Practical  
and spec-  
ulative  
intellect

It is true that the exercise of our mind is two-fold, to wit, practical and speculative (practical is as much as to say operative); the one and the other most delightful, though that of contemplation be more so, as was declared above. The practical exercise of the mind consists in ourselves working virtuously, that is, in integrity, [110] with prudence, with temperance, with courage, and with justice. The speculative exercise of the mind consists not in working ourselves at all, but in considering the works of God and of nature. And this and that exercise constitutes, as may be perceived, our blessedness and our supreme felicity. And this is the sweetness of the above-mentioned seed (as is now quite evident), whereto many times such seed attains not, by reason [120] that it is ill cultivated and that its shoots go astray. In like manner, by much correction and cultivation some portion of the out-growth of this seed may be so led to a place where it did not originally fall as to come to this fruit. And this is, as it were, a kind of engrafting of another nature on a diverse root. And so there is none who can be

**Martha** excused; for if a man hath not this seed from **and Mary** his natural [130] root, he may at least have it by way of engrafting. Would that, in fact, they were as many who had engrafted it on themselves, as are they who have let themselves straggle away from the good root!

But in truth the one of these exercises is more full of blessedness than the other, to wit the speculative, which, without any admixture, is the exercise of our most noble part, which, by reason of that fundamental love which has been spoken of, is chiefly to be loved, to wit [140] the intellect. And this part cannot in this life have its perfect exercise, which is to see God (who is the supreme object of the intellect), save in so far as the intellect considers him and contemplates him through his effects. And that we should supremely demand this blessedness and not the other (to wit that of the active life), the Gospel of Mark instructs us, if we would rightly consider it. Mark says that **Mary** [150] **Magdalene** and **James' Mary** and **Mary Salome** went to find the Saviour at the tomb, and found him not, but found a man dressed in white, who said to them: 'Ye seek the Saviour, and I say unto you that he is not here. Nevertheless, fear ye not, but go and say to his disciples, and to Peter, that he will go before them in Galilee, and there ye shall see him as he said unto you.' By these three [160] ladies may be understood the three schools of the active life, to wit, the Epicureans, the Stoics, and the Peripatetics, who go to the tomb, that is, to the present world, which is the receptacle of corruptible things, and demand the Saviour, that is,

blessedness, and find not; but they find a man **Galilee** in white garments, who, according to the testimony of Matthew, and also of the others, was an angel of God. And therefore Matthew [170] said: 'The angel of God descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it; and his aspect was as lightning and his garments were as snow.'

This angel is this nobleness of ours, which comes from God, as has been said, which speaks in our reason and declares to each one of these schools, that is to everyone who goes seeking blessedness in the active life [180], that it is not there; but go your way and tell the disciples and Peter, that is those who go seeking it and those who have gone astray (as Peter did when he denied him), that he will go before them in Galilee; that is to say, that blessedness will go before them in Galilee, that is, in speculation. Galilee is as much as to say 'whiteness,' and whiteness is a colour full of material light more than any other; and in like manner contemplation is [190] fuller of spiritual light than aught else which is here below. And it says: 'And will go before you,' and does not say: 'And will be with you,' to give to understand that God is ever in advance of our contemplation; nor ever can we here come up with him who is our supreme blessedness. And it says: 'And there ye will see him, as he said;' that is, 'And there ye will have of his sweetness, that is, of felicity, as has been promised to you here,' [200] that is to say, as it has been covenanted for you to have power to obtain. And thus it appears that our blessedness, which is this feli-



Supreme city of which is the discourse, we can first find blessedness imperfect in the active life, that is, in the activities of the moral virtues, and then perfectly, in a way, in the activities of the intellectual. The which two activities are the quickest and straightest ways to lead us to the supreme blessedness, which may not here be had; [210] as appears by what has been said.

Throughout the whole discussion of the relation of nobility to virtue, and in his apology at the end of Chapter XVII. for taking the moral rather than the intellectual virtues for examination in connection with nobility, Dante has been conscious of the conception upon which he directly enters in this chapter. Virtue refers to *conduct*, whereas the ultimate objects of desire are *mental experiences*. Therefore to *understand*, to *love* and to *rejoice*, not to *do*, must be the ultimate goal of effort. Virtue, then, can only be a path to the goal, and *ethics* can never be final or self-justifying, for they must have reference to a life of ideal emotional relations, to which they tend. The life of moral effort must therefore tend to supersede itself by introducing a life of spontaneous rightness and blessedness of affection. This, though inevitable to the thinker, has often seemed a hard saying to the teacher of morals and to the practical man. Hence Dante's desire (end of Chapter XVII.) to deal, as far as he can, with what is generally understood. Compare *Purgatorio*, XVIII. 49-63, together with the *argument* and *notes* (in the 'Temple Classics,' *Dante*). The whole of the *Paradiso* may be regarded as an elaboration of this conception.

1 ff. Compare I. 8 : 26 ff.

46. I have no hesitation in adopting the reading *negli uomini* in preference to the *nelle biade* of the Oxford *Dante*.

82. *Mind*. The Italian is *mente*. Elsewhere in this passage *mind* represents the Italian *animo* (to be carefully distinguished from *anima*), but the two words *animo* and *mente* appear to be used as synonyms. Whereas in IV. 15 : 108 ff., *mente* and *intelletto* are expressly identified; and it is in fact the *voûs* (*intelletto*) that is under discussion. Compare III. 2 : 102, *note*.

94-102. So also in *Purgatorio*, XVII. 93, a distinction is made between the rational love of the *animo* and natural love. See *note* on the passage. If anyone should choose to call the appetite of the senses *animo*, and then to attack the author's statements, it would not really affect his position, which is based on the relative nobleness of the *animo*. Whatever use he or his opponent may choose to make of words, it is rational appetite, not appetite of sense, that is under discussion.

107. Compare IV. 17 : 113-115, and II. 5 : 74.

131 ff. My punctuation differs from that of the editions ; and as this work is passing through the press I am glad to find that it is confirmed (and anticipated) by Mr Toynbee.

140 ff. III. 8 : 28-47 and *note* on 39. The contrast here is between seeing God essentially and seeing him in his effects. Compare *Paradiso*, XXXI. 109-111 and *note*.

187. Dante probably got this (groundless) idea of the meaning of Galilee from Ugucione (IV. 6 : 20, *note*), who himself took it from Isidore (Toynbee).

205. In spite of Dante's explicit assertions that full blessedness is not attainable on earth, his praises of his lady repeatedly draw him into declarations which almost amount to saying that philosophy can give perfect happiness on earth. Compare III. 8 (as above).

## CHAPTER XXIII

[(β) Of the manifestations of nobleness (i.) in general in every branch of life, and (ii.) in specific ways at every period of life. How human life being caused by heaven conforms to the heavenly arch in rising and declining. Of its apex, and of its four divisions, corresponding with the several combinations of the four principles of hot, cold, moist, dry. Of the analogous seasons of the year and periods of the day.]

Now that the definition of nobility has been **Noble-**  
adequately expounded and cleared, and has been **ness**  
illustrated in its divisions as far as possible, so

as manifested is, we are to proceed to the part of the text which begins :

β.

*The soul whom this excellence adorns ;*

wherein are shown the tokens whereby we may recognise the noble man that has been spoken [10] of. And this part is divided into i. ii. two ; the first affirms that this nobleness openly shines and glows through the whole life of the noble one ; in the second it is specifically indicated in its several lustres ; and this second part begins :

*Obedient, sweet and alive to shame.*

- i. Concerning the first part be it known that this divine seed, of which we have spoken above, buds forth in our [20] soul instantly, yielding itself in divers fashions to every power of the soul, according to their needs. It buds, then, in the vegetative, in the sensitive and in the rational, and branches out through the virtues of all of these, directing them to their perfections, and therein ever maintaining itself, until, together with that part of our soul which never dies, it returns to its most lofty and [30] glorious sower, to heaven. And this it says in that first part which has been spoken of.
- ii. Then, when it says :

*Obedient, sweet and alive to shame, and the rest,*

it sets forth that by which we may recognise the noble man, by apparent signs, which are the working of this divine excellence. And 1°, 2°, 3°, 4°. this part may be divided into four, according as

it works diversely in the four ages, to wit, in the  
 in adolescence, in manhood, in age, [40] and several  
 in decrepitude. And the second part begins: ages

*In manhood temperate and brave ;*

the third begins :

*And in old age ;*

the fourth begins :

*Then in the fourth term of life.*

Such is the meaning of this part in general ; concerning which it should be known that every effect, as effect, receives the likeness of its cause as far as it is possible to retain it. [50] Wherefore inasmuch as our life (as said above), and also that of every creature that lives here below, is caused by heaven, and heaven displays itself to all such effects not in its complete circle, but in part thereof, and thus its motion must needs be above them, and like an arch, as it were embracing all lives as it mounts and descends (I say embracing these 'lives' both of men and of other living things), they must needs be [60] in a way likened to the image of an arch. Returning then to our own life alone, with which we are at present concerned, I affirm that it proceeds after the fashion of this arch, mounting and descending.

And be it known that this upstretching arch would be equal [in every case] if the material of our seminal complexion did not impede the rule of human nature. But since the humid factor (which is the seat [70] and the nutriment of the heat which constitutes our life) is less or more, and is of better quality, and has more

Of the duration, in one effect than in another, it comes  
 apex of life to pass that the arch of life of one man is of less  
 or greater stretch than that of another. Death  
 is sometimes violent or is hastened by incidental  
 weakness; but only that which is commonly  
 called 'natural' constitutes the limit whereof  
 the psalmist says: 'Thou hast placed [80] a  
 boundary which may not be passed.' And  
 inasmuch as the master of our life, Aristotle,  
 was aware of this arch of which we are speaking,  
 he seemed to maintain that our life was no  
 other than a mounting and a descending,  
 wherefore he says in that wherein he treats of  
*Youth and Age*, that youth is no other than the  
 growing of life. It is hard to say where the  
 highest point of this arch is, because of the [90]  
 inequality spoken of above; but in the majority  
 I take it to be somewhere between the thirtieth  
 and the fortieth year. And I believe that in  
 those of perfect nature it would be in the thirty-  
 fifth year. And I am moved thereto by this  
 argument that our Saviour Christ was of perfect  
 nature, and it was his will to die in the thirty-  
 fourth year of his age; for it was not fitting that  
 the Divinity should thus abide in decrease.  
 Nor is it to be [100] believed that he would  
 not abide in this our life up to the apex, inasmuch  
 as he had been therein in the low estate of  
 infancy. And this is manifested by the hour of  
 the day of his death, for he desired to conform  
 this to his life; wherefore Luke tells us that it  
 was about the sixth hour when he died, which  
 is to say the apex of the day. Wherefore we  
 may understand by this that about the thirty-fifth  
 year of Christ was the apex [110] of his age.

However, it is not specially with reference to its central point that scriptures divide this arch, but rather, according as the combinations of the contrary qualities which enter into our composition are four (to which, I mean to each combination, one section of our life seems to be appropriated), they divide it into four parts, which are called the four ages. The first is adolescence, which is appropriated to the [120] hot and moist; the second is manhood, which is appropriated to the hot and dry; the third is age, which is appropriated to the cold and dry; the fourth is decrepitude, which is appropriated to the cold and moist, as Albert writes in the fourth of the *Meteorics*.

Of the  
four ages

And these parts occur in like manner in the year, in spring, in summer, in autumn, and in winter; and also in the day, that is, [130] up to tierce, and then up to nones (omitting sext between these two, for an obvious reason), and then up till vespers, and from vespers onward. And therefore the Gentiles said that the car of the sun had four horses, the first was called Eous, the second Pyroeis, the third Æthon, the fourth Phlegon (according as Ovid writes in the second of the *Metamorphoses*), with reference to the parts of the day. And [140] briefly be it known that, as said above in the sixth chapter of the third treatise, the church in distinguishing between the hours of the day makes use of the temporal hours, of which there are twelve in each day, long or short according to the measure of the sun; and because the sixth hour, which is midday, is the most noble of the whole day, and the most virtuous, she approximates her

Noontide offices thereto from each direction, that is to say noble before and after, as much as she may. And therefore the office of the [150] first part of the day, that is tierce, is said at its close, and that of the third part and of the fourth at their beginnings; and therefore we speak of 'mid-tierce' before the bell rings for that division, and of mid-nones after the bell has rung for that division; and in like manner of mid-vespers. And therefore let every man know that the right nones ought always to be rung at the beginning of the seventh hour of the day; and let this suffice for the present [160] digression.

28-30. Compare *Purgatorio*, XXI. 44 f.; *Paradiso*, XXX. 112-114.

58. Though man as an immortal being is not confined by the material heavens, yet as long as his soul is united to his body on earth he is subject to their limitations in all his organic life. Compare II. 9: 20 ff.

92 ff. The Florentines began their year on the 25th of March, reckoning that the incarnation took place at the moment of the annunciation. Apparently Dante held that Christ died just on the threshold of the thirty-fifth year after the annunciation, which would be in the thirty-fourth year of his life, reckoned from his birth. *Inferno*, XXI. 113, in combination with this passage, is generally (and I think rightly) regarded as giving the year 1300 A.D. for the Vision, but the phraseology of this passage, if the reading is correct, is too equivocal, and the questions involved are too complicated, to justify a discussion of the dissentient opinions here.

95. If we were to push the combination of this passage with *Inferno*, I. 1, so far as to make it involve an assertion on Dante's part that he himself was *ottimamente naturato*, we should probably not be doing him any injustice. Compare *Purgatorio*, XXX. 109 ff.

105. *Luke tells us*. The passage (Luke xxiii. 44-46) runs: *Erat autem fere hora sexta; et tenebrae factae sunt*



*in universam terram usque in horam nonam, et obscuratus est sol et velum templi scissum est medium. Et clamans voce magna Jesus ait: Pater, in manus tuas commendo spiritum meum! et haec dicens expiravit.* Did Dante take *usque in horam nonam* as merely defining the period to which the darkness lasted? Or does he understand 'noon' by *hora nona* and so regard it as the same as *hora sexta*? See close of this chapter, line 157.

130. Compare III. 6: 12-32. Whatever difficulties this passage may present with reference to the usages of the Church, Dante's meaning seems perfectly clear. *tierce* lasts from the first hour to the third (*i.e.*, 6 to 9 a.m.), *sext* from the third to the sixth (9 a.m. to 12 noon), *nones* from the sixth to the ninth (12 to 3 p.m.), and *vespers* from the ninth to the twelfth (3 to 6 p.m.). But the attraction of midday makes us ring the hours as near as we can to *sext*; and therefore *tierce* is rung at the end of the period it covers (*i.e.*, at the end of the third hour, 9 o'clock a.m.), whereas *nones* and *vespers* are rung at the beginning of the periods they cover (that is, at the end of the sixth and the end of the ninth hour respectively, *i.e.*, at 12 noon and 3 p.m.); and accordingly *sext* is squeezed out altogether. Dante's own usage accords with this. Thus in *Inferno*, XXXIV. 96, *mezza terza* is half-past seven a.m., and in *Purgatorio*, III. 25, *vespero* is 3 p.m.

## CHAPTER XXIV

[Further of the four ages. And then (1°) of adolescence and the four graces that beseeem it. And first (*i.*) of obedience.]

RETURNING to our purpose, I say that human Adolescence life is divided into four ages. The first is called adolescence, that is, the 'increasing' of life. The second is called 'manhood,' that is to say, the age of achievement, which may give perfection, and in this sense it is itself called

Manhood perfect, because none can give aught save what  
and age he hath. The third is called old age. The  
fourth is called decrepitude, [10] as said above.

As to the first, no one hesitates, but every  
sage agrees that it lasts up to the twenty-fifth  
year; and because up to that time our soul is  
chiefly intent on conferring growth and beauty  
on the body, whence many and great changes  
take place in the person, the rational part cannot  
come to perfect discretion; wherefore Reason  
lays down that before this age [20] there are  
certain things a man may not do without a  
guardian of full age.

As for the second, which is truly the summit  
of our life, there is great diversity concerning  
the period to be taken; but passing over what  
philosophers and physicians have written about  
it, and having recourse to my own argumentation,  
I say that in the majority (on whom every  
judgment about a natural phenomenon may and  
should be based) this age lasts twenty years.  
And the argument which gives me this, [30]  
is that, if the apex of our arch is at thirty-five,  
the age under discussion should have as long a  
period of descent as it has of ascent; and this  
rising and descending may be likened to the  
sustained height of the arch wherein but slight  
bending is to be discerned. We have it, then,  
that the prime of life is completed at the forty-  
fifth year.

And as adolescence lasts twenty-five years,  
mounting up to the prime of [40] life, so the  
descent, that is, age, is a like period, succeeding  
to the prime of life; and so age ends at the  
seventieth year.

But inasmuch as adolescence (taking it as we have done above) does not begin at the beginning of life, but some eight months after, and inasmuch as our nature is eager to rise and hangs back from descending (because the natural [50] heat is reduced and has small power, and the humid is thickened, not in quantity but in quality, and so is less easily evaporated and consumed) it comes to pass that beyond old age there remains perhaps to the amount of ten years of our life, or a little more or a little less. And this period is called decrepitude. Whence we have it of Plato—whom (both in the strength of his own nature, and because of the [60] physiognomoscope which Socrates cast for him when first he saw him) we may believe to have had the most excellent nature—that he lived eighty-one years, as testifies Tully in that *Of Old Age*. And I believe that if Christ had not been crucified and had lived out the space which his life had power to cover according to its nature, he would have been changed at the eighty-first year from mortal body to eternal.

Truly, as said above, [70] these several ages may be longer or shorter, according to our complexion and composition, but however they may fall, I take it that the proportion laid down should be observed in them all, that is, we must make the ages longer or shorter according to the totality of the whole period of their natural life. Through all these ages this nobleness of which we are speaking manifests its effects diversely [80] in the ennobled soul; and this is what this part about which I am at present writing purposes to show. And here, be it

Of virtues known, that our nature, when good and straight,  
 in season follows a seasonable procedure in us (as we see  
 the nature of plants doing in them), and there-  
 fore different ways and different deportment are  
 suitable at one age rather than at others, wherein  
 the ennobled soul proceeds in [90] due order,  
 on one simple path, exercising its acts in their  
 times and ages according as they are ordained  
 for its ultimate fruit. And Tully agrees herein  
 in that *Of Old Age*. And passing by the  
 account which Virgil gives under a figure in the  
*Æneid* of this changing progress of the ages, and  
 passing by what Egidius the Eremite says in  
 the first part of the *Regimen of Princes*, and  
 passing by what [100] Tully says of it in the first  
*Of Offices*, and following only that which reason  
 1°. may see of herself, I say that this first age is  
 the gate and path whereby we enter upon a  
 good life. And this entrance must of necessity  
 have certain things which nature in her goodness,  
 failing not in things necessary, giveth us; even as  
 we see she giveth leaves to the vine to protect her  
 fruit, and tendrils [110] wherewith she supports  
 and binds her weakness so as to sustain the  
 weight of her fruit.

Nature then, in her goodness, gives to this  
 i. ii. iii. iv. age four things needful for entrance into the  
 city of the right life. The first is obedience,  
 the second is sweetness, the third sensitiveness  
 to shame, the fourth is grace of body, as the  
 2. text says in the first section. You are to know  
 [120] then that like as he who was never in a  
 city would not know how to keep the way  
 without instruction from him who has practised  
 it, so the adolescent who enters into the

wandering wood of this life would not know how to keep the right path if it were not shown him by his elders. Nor would their indications avail if he were not obedient to their commandments, and therefore obedience was [130] necessary for this age. It is true that some might say: 'Then, can he be called obedient who shall give credence to evil commands, just as well as he who shall give credence to good ones?' I answer that this would not be obedience but transgression, for if the king command one path and the servant command another, the servant is not to be obeyed for that would be disobeying the king, and so would be transgression. And therefore Solomon [140] says when he purposes to correct his son (and this is his first injunction): 'Hearken, my son, to the admonition of thy father,' and then at once he warns him off from the evil counsel and instruction of others, saying: 'Let not the sinners have power to allure thee with flatteries nor with delights, that thou go with them.' Wherefore, just as, so soon as he is born, the child cleaves to his mother's breast, in like manner, as soon as [150] any light of the mind appears in him, he should turn to the correction of his father, and his father should teach him; and let him see to it that he give him no example of himself in his works counter to his words of correction, for we see every son by nature look more to the prints of the paternal feet than to others. And therefore the law which provides for this affirms and commands that the person of the father should ever [160] be regarded as holy and reverent by his sons. And thus we

season- see that obedience was necessary in this age.  
 able in And therefore Solomon writes in the *Proverbs*  
 adoles- that 'he who humbly and obediently endures  
 cence fitting reprehension from the corrector shall be  
 glorious,' and he says 'shall be' to give to  
 understand that he is speaking to the adolescent  
 who cannot be glorious at his present age. And  
 if any should cavil, in that this is said of the  
 father and [170] not of others, I say that all  
 other obedience should be reduced to the father.  
 Wherefore the apostle says to the Colossians :  
 'Children obey your fathers in all things, for  
 this is the will of God.' And if the father is  
 not living, this obedience should be reduced to  
 him who is left as father by the father's last  
 will; and if the father die intestate it should  
 be reduced to him to whom Reason commits his  
 guidance. [180] And next his masters and  
 elders should be obeyed, to whom in a certain  
 sense he seems to have been entrusted by the  
 father or by him who holds the place of father.  
 But since the present chapter has been long, on  
 account of the profitable digressions which it  
 contains, the other points are to be discussed in  
 another chapter.

5 f. There is a play upon words in the original. *Gioventute* is the age which *può giovare*. I have sometimes translated *gioventute* 'manhood,' and sometimes 'the prime of life,' or 'prime manhood.' 'Youth' would almost always be misleading.

9. *Senettute* is sometimes translated 'old age,' sometimes simply 'age.'

47. The Oxford *Dante* reads *otto anni*; but the manuscript authority is said to be in favour of *otto mesi*, which is certainly the true reading. Dante's argument is as follows: All agree that adolescence ends at twenty-five. At thirty-five the central point of life is reached. Ten

years, therefore, from the end of adolescence brings us to the middle of manhood; and so ten years more will bring us to its close. At forty-five we enter old age, which must last as long as adolescence did, and this will carry us to seventy, if we reckon adolescence at twenty-five years, that is to say, if we suppose it to begin at birth. But 'reckoning so' (*pigliandola per lo modo che detto è*) we do not really come to the beginning of life, for we have not reckoned the pre-natal period; and (for the reasons assigned in the text) we must reckon a longer period for the supplement, after the termination of age, than we did for the preface before the beginning of adolescence. The only difficulty that may present itself to the reader is that the pre-natal period is given as 'about eight months,' whereas nine might have been expected. But a comparison of the notes of Buti and of Benvenuto on *Purgatorio*, XXV. 50, will yield us the curious fact that in the opinion of Dante's age the actual life of the fœtus began just twenty-four days after conception.

60. The Italian is *e per la fisonomia che di lui prese Socrate*, which is usually understood 'according to the physiognomy which enamoured Socrates of him'; but I think the translation I have given must be correct. The art of reading men's characters from a study of their features was practised in ancient times, and a pseudo-Aristotelian treatise is extant on the subject. According to a well-known story (Cicero, *De Fato*, Chap. V.), Socrates himself was inspected by one, Zopyrus, 'the physiognomist, who professed to read men's characters and natures from their body, their eyes, their features, their brows.' And Apuleius (*De Dogmate Platonis*, i. 1) tells how Socrates had a vision of a wonderful cygnet just before he first saw Plato, and 'as soon as he saw him, and read his inmost character from his outward face,' pronounced him to be the swan of the vision. I do not know of any evidence that Dante was directly acquainted with Apuleius, but he was known in the thirteenth century, and this very story is expressly cited from him by Vincent de Beauvais (*Spec. Hist.*, iii. 60), though not in a form on which Dante's reference could be based.

69. In the preceding chapter, line 65 ff.

84. *Seasonable*. The Italian is *ragionevolmente*, which will apply to anything that observes due relation or proportion.



97. *Egidius the Eremita*. An Augustinian monk (c. 1245-1316 A.D.). Besides the book here referred to he wrote, at the command of Boniface VIII., a treatise supporting the validity of Celestine's abdication (Toynbee). Compare *Inferno*, III. 58-60. There is of course no connection between this Egidius and the early disciple of Francis mentioned in *Paradiso*, XI. 83.

146. *Proverbs*, i. 10. *Fili mi, si te lactaverint peccatores, ne acquiescas eis*. The verb *lactare*, originally 'to suckle,' was regularly used in Latin for 'blandishing' or 'enticing.' The phrase doubtless influenced (as Miss Hillard suggests) Dante's imagery in the following passage.

165. *Proverbs*, xv. 31. *Auris quæ audit increpationes vitæ, in medio sapientium commorabitur*. There is nothing about being 'glorious' in the passage; but Dante appears to have read *commorabitur* = 'shall abide' as *commemorabitur* = 'shall be commemorated.' He probably read from a manuscript with contractions, and false 'expansions' are a very frequent source of error.

170. That is to say, 'it may be objected that I have only argued for obedience to the father, which does not cover the whole ground.' Dante proceeds *more suo* to show that it does, by implication, cover the whole ground.

173. *Colossians*, iii. 20. *Filii obedite parentibus per omnia: hoc enim placitum est in Domino*. It is certainly worth noting that Dante translates *parentibus* 'fathers,' instead of 'parents'; but rather too much has been made of this. No doubt he honestly understood the text as he translates it; and did not deliberately substitute 'fathers' in order to exclude 'mothers.' Compare *De Monarchia*, III. 3: 128 ff., *illa reverentia fretus, quam pius filius debet patri, quam pius filius matri*. And also *Paradiso*, XXVII. 133-135, as well as such passages as *Purgatorio*, XXX. 43-45, of which there are many. There is no doubt, however, that both from the physiological and the sociological point of view Dante shared the limitations of his age as to motherhood. Compare, for instance, the complete ignoring, in chapter xxi. of this treatise, of the possibility of any differences in the female factor in generation affecting the constitution of the offspring.

## CHAPTER XXV

[Of the further graces that beseem adolescence, and (*ii.*) of sweetness, (*iii.*) of abashment, of which there are three kinds. Of Statius's examples from the court of Adrastus. (*iv.*) Of comeliness of person.

NOT only is this well-natured soul obedient in adolescence, but it is also sweet, and this is the second thing which is necessary in this time of life for rightly entering the gate of manhood. **Sweetness and abashment**

It is necessary because we cannot have perfect *ii.* life without friends, as Aristotle hath it in the eighth of the *Ethics*; and the greater part of friendships appear [10] to be sown in this first age, because therein man begins to be gracious or the opposite. The which grace is acquired by sweet conduct, to wit gentle and courteous speech, gentle and courteous service and action. And therefore says Solomon to his youthful son: 'The scorner God scorner, and to the meek God will give grace.' And elsewhere he says: 'Remove from thee the evil mouth, and let [20] churlish mowings be far from thee.' Whereby it appeareth that this sweetness is necessary, as has been said.

And further the emotion of abashment is need- *iii.* ful to this period of life, and therefore in this period the good and noble nature manifests it as the text says. And since abashment is the most obvious token of nobleness in adolescence (for it is then supremely needful for the right foundation of [30] our life, which is what the noble nature purposes), we must diligently speak thereof some little. I say that by abashment I

season-able in adolescence  
*i<sup>o</sup>. ii<sup>o</sup>. iii<sup>o</sup>.* understand three emotions necessary for the right founding of our life. The first is bemazement; the second is pudicity; the third is shame; although the common folk perceives not this distinction. And all these three are needful to this period of life, for this reason: This [40] period needs to be reverent and desirous of knowledge; this period needs to be restrained, so as not to transgress; this period needs to be penitent for error, so as not to become hardened in erring. And all these make up the emotions mentioned above, which are vulgarly called abashment.

*i<sup>o</sup>.* For bemazement is bewilderment of mind on seeing or hearing, or in any wise [50] perceiving, great and wonderful things; for in so far as they appear great, they make him who perceives them reverent towards them, and in so far as they appear wonderful they make him who perceives them desirous to have knowledge of them. And therefore the ancient kings contrived magnificent works of gold and gems and artful machinations in their mansions, that they who beheld them should be bemazed and therefore reverent, and should make question of the nonourable conditions [60] of the king. And therefore says Statius, the sweet poet, in the first of the *Story of Thebes*, that when Adrastus, king of the Argives, saw Polynices clad in a lion's hide, and saw Tideus covered with the hide of a wild boar, and minded him of the answer which Apollo had given concerning his daughters, that he was bemazed, and therefore the more reverent and the more desirous to know.

*ii<sup>o</sup>.* Pudicity is a shrinking of the mind [70] from

foul things, with the fear of falling into them; as we see in virgins and in good women and in the adolescent, who are so modest that not only where they are urged or tempted to err, but where only a bare imagination of venereal pleasure can find place, are all painted in the face with pale or with red colour. Wherefore says the above-named poet in the first book [80] *Of Thebes*, just cited, that when Aceste, the nurse of Argia and of Deipyle, daughters of king Adrastus, brought them before the eyes of their august father, in the presence of two strangers, to wit Polynices and Tydeus, the virgins became pale and red, and their eyes fled from every other regard and kept turned only to their father's face, as though secure. Oh, how many faults does this pudicity restrain! How many unseemly acts and demands [90] does it put to silence! How many unseemly desires does it rein back! How many evil temptations does it not abash—not only in the modest person's self, but in him who looks thereon! How many foul words does it hold back! For, as Tully says in the first *Of the Offices*: 'There is no foul act that it is not foul to mention.' And accordingly a clean and noble man never so speaks that his words would be unseemly for a woman. Oh, how [100] ill it becomes the man who goes in search of honour to speak of things which would be unseemly in the mouth of any woman!

Shame is fear of disgrace for a fault committed. And from this fear springs repentance for the fault, which has in itself a bitterness which is a chastisement against repeating the

The  
court of  
Adrastus

**Bodily** fault. Wherefore this same poet says in that **graces** same passage, that, when Polynices was [110] questioned by king Adrastus of his origin, he hesitated before speaking, for shame of the fault he had committed against his father, and further for the faults of Ædipus his father, which seemed to leave their trace in the shame of the son. And he did not mention his father, but his ancestors and his land and his mother. And by all this it well appears that shame is necessary to this period of life.

*iv.* And not only does the noble nature display [120] obedience, sweetness and abashment in this age, but it displays beauty and agility of body, as the text says when it declares :

*And adorns the person.*

And this 'adorns' is a verb and not a noun; I mean a verb indicative, present tense, and third person. And here be it known that this effect also is necessary for the excellence of our life, for our soul must needs accomplish a great part of its doings by a [130] bodily organ; and it accomplishes them well when the body is well ordained and disposed in its parts. And when it is well ordained and disposed, then it is beauteous as a whole and in its parts; for the due order of our members conveys the pleasure of a certain wondrous harmony; and their right disposition, that is their health, throws over them a colour lovely to behold. And so, to say that the noble nature beautifies [140] its body and makes it comely and alert, is to say not less than that it adjusts it to the perfection of order. And this, together with the other

things that have been discoursed of, appears to be needful to adolescence; and these are the things which the noble soul, that is the noble nature, being, as said above, a thing sown by divine providence, designs for it in its first stage.

Full  
equip-  
ment of  
adolesc-  
cence

20. *Proverbs*, iv. 24. *Remove a te os pravum, et detrahentia labia sint procul a te.* The Italian reads *e gli atti villani sieno lungi da te*, from which it is obvious that Dante took *detrahentia* as intransitive, and instead of *detracting* lips understood it to mean *writhing* lips, and so read it as a prohibition of 'making faces' at people! *Atto* is used by Dante for every kind of significant expression or gesture. The transition from facial expression to expressive gestures or pose being so much easier to the Italian than to the northerner, *atto* is in many connections a singularly difficult word to translate. I have often rendered it 'gesture.'

24 ff. It is impossible to find four words for *vergogna*, *stupore*,  *pudore*, and *verecundia*, which shall be at once familiar and precise. The translator can only ask indulgence of his readers. Happily Dante makes his meaning perfectly clear in each case by his definitions and examples. Modesty might be a better word than 'pudicity' as the translation of  *pudore*, but I was unwilling to narrow 'modesty' to one particular form of its manifestation. Against both 'modesty' and 'pudicity' it may be rightly objected that they stand for a 'disposition' and not a 'passion' or 'emotion.' Compare II. 11: 41-47.

66. *The answer*, etc. The oracle had declared that they were to marry a lion and a boar.

95. What Cicero says (I. 35) is really quite different, *viz.*, that there are some things which are not foul if done in privacy but are foul to speak of. Brunetto Latini attributes to Socrates the sentiment here erroneously assigned to Cicero. (Moore.)

125. Compare I. 7: 44-50, *note.*

## CHAPTER XXVI

[Of the graces that beseem (2<sup>o</sup>) manhood, to wit, (i.) temperance, (ii.) courage, (iii.) love, (iv.) courtesy, and (v.) loyalty; and of Virgil's example of Æneas.]

**For self-perfection** Now that we have discoursed upon the first section of this part, which shows whereby we may recognise the noble man by outward tokens, we are to proceed to the second section thereof, which begins:

*In manhood temperate and brave.*

2<sup>o</sup>. It says, then, that as the noble nature in adolescence shows itself to be obedient, sweet, and alive to shame, giving adornment to [10] the person, so, in the prime of life, it is temperate, and brave, and loving, and courteous, and loyal, which five things appear and are necessary to our perfection in so far as has respect to ourselves. And concerning this we are to know that everything which the noble nature prepares in the first period of life is provided and ordained by the foresight of universal nature, which ordains particular nature to her perfection. [20] This perfection of ours may be considered in two ways: it may be considered as having respect to ourselves, and this perfection should be reached in the prime of our life, which is its apex; or it may be considered as having respect to others. And since it is necessary first to be perfect and then to communicate perfection to others, this second perfection must needs be had after that age, to wit in old age, [30] as will be said below.

i. ii. iii.  
iv. v.



Here, then, must be called to mind the dis- we need  
course contained above in the twenty-second temper-  
chapter of this treatise, concerning the appetite-  
which is born in us from our beginning. This  
appetite never doth aught else save pursue and  
flee; and whensoever it pursues the right thing  
in the right degree and flees the right thing  
[40] in the right degree, man is within the  
boundaries of his perfection. But this appetite  
must needs be ridden by reason. For just as a  
horse let loose, however noble he may be by  
nature, does not conduct himself aright by him-  
self without a good rider, so this 'appetite,'  
which is known as irritable and appetitive, how-  
ever noble it may be, must needs obey reason,  
which [50] guides it with rein and with spurs,  
like a good horseman. The rein it uses when  
appetite is in pursuit (and this rein is called  
temperance, which shows the limit up to which the  
pursuit is to be carried); the spur it uses when  
appetite is fleeing to make it return to the place  
whence it seeks to flee (and this spur is called  
courage, or consciousness of greatness, which  
virtue shows us where to make a stand and fight).  
And thus restrained, [60] Virgil, our greatest  
poet, shows Æneas to have been, in that part of  
the *Æneid* where this period of life is repre-  
sented, which part embraces the fourth, the fifth,  
and the sixth books of the *Æneid*. And how i.  
great a restraint was that, when having received  
from Dido so much solace, as will be discoursed  
of below in the seventh treatise, and experiencing  
such delight with her, he departed to follow a  
path honourable and praiseworthy and fruitful,  
as [70] is written in the fourth of the *Æneid*.

courage, kindness, courtesy  
 ii. How great spurring was that when the same Æneas hardened himself to enter alone with the Sybil into hell and search for the soul of his father Anchises, in the face of so many perils, as is shown in the sixth of the aforesaid story! Whereby it appears how in manhood it behoves us for our perfection to be temperate and brave. And this is what goodness of nature accomplishes and shows forth, as the [80] text expressly says.

iii. Moreover, it is needful to this period of life, for its perfection, to be loving; because it behoves it to look back and fore, as being itself in the meridian circle. It behoves it to love its elders, from whom it has received being and sustenance and instruction, so that it may not seem ungrateful. It behoves it to love its juniors, so that, loving them, it may give them [90] of its benefits, by whom then in its lessening prosperity it may itself be sustained and honoured. And this love the above-named poet shows that Æneas had in the above-mentioned fifth book, when he left the aged Trojans in Sicily, commending them to Acestes, and released them from their toils; and when in that place he instructed Ascanius, his son, with the other young people, in tournament. Whereby it appears that love [100] is necessary to this period, as the text says.

iv. Further, it is needful to this period of life to be courteous, for although it becomes every age to be of courteous ways, yet to this age, above all, it is needful to practise them, since, on the other hand, age cannot so do, because of its gravity and the severity which is demanded of

it ; and so still more in decrepitude. And this courtesy [110] that most lofty poet shows Æneas to have had in the above said sixth book, where he says that Æneas, king as he was, to honour the corpse of the dead Misenus (who had been Hector's trumpeter, and had afterwards commended himself to him), girt himself and took the axe to help to hew the wood for the fire which was to burn the dead body, as was their custom. Wherefore it is clear that this quality is required in manhood : and therefore [120] the noble soul displays it in this age, as was said.

and  
loyalty,  
as had  
Æneas

Further, it is needful to this period of life to be *v.* loyal. Loyalty is the following out and putting into action of that which the laws dictate ; and this is especially fitting for one in the prime of life ; for the adolescent, as has been said, because of his minority, deserves pardon on easy terms ; the senior ought to be just, in virtue of his wider experience, and should follow the laws only [130] in so far as his own right judgment and the law are one and the same thing ; and he should follow his own just mind, as it were, without any law ; which the man in his prime cannot do. And let it suffice that he observes the law and delights in observing it, just as the above said poet in the above said fifth book declares that Æneas did when he instituted the games in Sicily, on the anniversary of his father's death ; for he loyally [140] gave to each one of the victors what he promised for the victory, as was their ancient usage, which was their law. Wherefore it is manifest that to this period of life loyalty, courtesy, love, courage and temperance are needful, as says the text which

in man- hood we are now discussing ; and therefore the noble soul reveals them all.

40. Compare *Purgatorio*, XVII. 97-99.

45. Compare *Purgatorio*, VI. 88-99.

47. *Irritable*, in the physiological sense of 'answering to a stimulus.'

57. *Consciousness of greatness*, i.e., *magnanimità*. Compare IV. 17 : 44, *note*. The man who is worthy of great things, and knows it, will rightly 'take his stand' at a point where it would not be sublime but ridiculous or flippant for an ordinary man to do so. Compare the quotation from Cicero in *De Monarchia*, II. 5 : 159-170.

67. We gather, then, that the seventh treatise would have dealt with the ode, *Così nel mio parlar voglio esser aspro* ; in the thirty-sixth line of which Dido is named, the only instance of the occurrence of a personal name in any undoubtedly authentic ode of Dante's. We may perhaps find a clue in this passage to the method in which Dante meant to approach his task of allegorising this terrible ode. The allegorising of the *Æneid*, as we may see from this passage, involved the degradation of Dido into the symbol of the seductive and effeminating passions, to desert which was virtue. She was the prototype of the Alcinas, the Armidas and the Duessas of the later literature. Few heroines indeed have been so deeply wronged !

123. The Italian *lealtà* does not lend itself any more easily to this forced etymological interpretation than does our 'loyalty.'

143. Dante, in agreement with modern scholarship, regards custom as the primitive form of law.

## CHAPTER XXVII

[(3<sup>o</sup>) Of the graces that beseem age, to wit (*i.*) prudence, (*ii.*) justice, (*iii.*) generosity, and (*iv.*) affability ; and of Ovid's example of Æacus.]

WE have sufficiently inspected and considered the section of the text which sets forth the probity which the noble soul furnishes to manhood, wherefore it seems right to turn to the third part which begins : To be a blessing to others  
3<sup>o</sup>.

*And in old age,*

wherein the text purposes to show those things which the noble nature reveals and must have in the third period, [10] to wit old age. And it says that the noble soul in age is prudent, is just, is open-handed, and rejoices to tell of the goodness and excellence of others, and to hear of it ; that is to say is affable ; *i. ii. iii. iv.* and truly these four virtues are most fitting to this age.

And to perceive this be it known that as Tully says in that *Of Old Age* : ' Our life has a fixed course and a simple path, [20] that of our right nature ; and in every part of our life place is given for certain things.' Wherefore, just as that is given to adolescence (as said above), whereby we may come to perfection and maturity, so too is given to manhood that perfection and that maturity themselves, so that the sweetness of its fruit may be profitable to itself and to others ; for, as Aristotle says, ' man is a civic animal,' [30] wherefore he is required not only to be useful to himself but

we need also to others. And so we read of Cato  
prudence, that he did not think of himself as born for  
himself, but for his country and for all the  
world. Wherefore, after our own proper per-  
fection, which is acquired in manhood, that  
perfection should also come which enlightens  
not only ourselves but others, and man should  
open out like a rose that can no longer keep  
closed, and should spread abroad the perfume  
which has been generated [40] within; and this  
should come about in that third period of life  
with which we are dealing. It is fitting, then,  
2. to be prudent, that is wise; and to be so  
demands a good memory of things formerly  
seen, and good knowledge of things present, and  
good foresight of things to come. And, as the  
Philosopher says in the sixth of the *Ethics*, 'it  
is impossible for a man to be wise unless he is  
good,' and therefore a man is not to be called  
wise who proceeds by stratagems [50] and  
deceits, but he is to be called astute; for as no  
one would call a man who had skill to strike the  
point of a knife into the pupil of the eye wise, so  
neither is he to be called wise who hath skill  
to do some evil thing, doing the which he  
ever injureth himself ere he injures another. If  
it be rightly considered, from prudence come  
good counsels which lead the man himself and  
others to a right goal of human affairs [60] and  
doings. And this is that gift which Solomon,  
when he saw himself set to govern the people,  
required of God, as is written in the third book of  
*Kings*. And a prudent man such as this waiteth  
not till someone saith to him: 'Give me  
counsel'; but himself foreseeing, without being

requested he giveth him counsel, like to the rose justice, which not only giveth its perfume to him who cometh to it that he may have it, but also to everyone who [70] passeth it by. Here some physician or legist might say: 'Then am I to carry my counsel and to give it even to those that ask it not, and pluck no fruit of my art?' I answer as our Lord saith: 'I receive freely if it hath been freely given.' I say, then, sir legist, that those counsels which have not respect to thy art, and which proceed only from that good wit which God gave [80] thee (and this is the prudence whereof we are now discoursing), thou shouldest not sell to the children of him who gave it thee. Those which have respect to the art which thou hast purchased, these thou mayest sell, yet not so but that it is fitting from time to time to pay tithes and give to God, that is to those poor who have nought left save the divine grace.

It behoves this period of life also to be just, so *ii.* that its judgments and its [90] authority may be a light and a law to others. And because this singular virtue, to wit justice, was seen by the ancient philosophers to be revealed perfectly in this period of life, they committed the guidance of the city to those who had reached this age; and therefore the college of the rulers was called the Senate. Oh, my wretched, wretched country! What pity for thee constrains me whensoever I read, whensoever I write, of aught that hath respect to civil [100] government! But since justice will be dealt with in the last treatise but one of this volume, let it suffice at present to have touched this little upon it.

It is also meet for this period of life to be *iii.*



liberality generous; because a thing is most in season when it most satisfies the due of its nature; nor can the due of generosity ever be so satisfied as at this period of life. For if we would rightly consider [110] how Aristotle proceeds in the fourth of the *Ethics*, and Tully in that *Of Offices*, generosity must be in such time and place that the generous man injure not either himself or others! Which thing may not be without prudence and without justice, which to have in perfection by the natural way before this age is impossible. Ah ye ill-starred and ill-born, who disinherit widows and wards, who snatch from the most helpless, [120] who rob and seize the rights of others, and therefrom prepare feasts, make gifts of horses and arms, robes and money, wear gorgeous apparel, build marvellous edifices, and believe yourselves to be doing generously! And what else is this than to take the cloth from the altar and cover therewith the robber and his table? No otherwise ye tyrants should your presents be scoffed at than the robber who should invite his guests to his house [130] and should set upon the table the napkin he had stolen from the altar with the ecclesiastical signs yet on it, and should suppose that no one would perceive it. Harken ye stubborn ones to what Tully saith against you in the book *Of Offices*: 'Verily there be many who, desiring to be conspicuous and famous, take from these to give to those, thinking to be held in esteem if they make folk wealthy by what means soever. But this [140] is so counter to what ought to be that nought is more.'

Further, it becomes this period of life to be <sup>and affa-</sup> affable, that is, to love to speak of good and to <sup>bility,</sup> hear of it, because it is well to speak good <sup>as had</sup> on those occasions when it will be hearkened to. <sup>Æacus</sup> And this period of life carries a shade of <sup>12.</sup> authority, whereby it seems that men hearken more to it than to any earlier age. And it seems that it ought to have more beautiful and fair [150] news because of its long experience of life. Wherefore Tully says in that *Of Old Age*, in the person of the ancient Cato: ‘Upon me has grown both the desire and the enjoyment of conversation beyond what was my wont.’

And that all these four things are fitting to this period of life, Ovid instructs us in the seventh of the *Metamorphoses*, in the story where he tells how Cephalus of Athens came to King Æacus for help in the war [160] that Athens was waging with Crete. He shows that the old Æacus was prudent, when, having lost by pestilence, through corruption of the air, almost all his people, he wisely had recourse to God, and asked from him the restoration of his dead people; and by his wit, which held him to patience and made him turn to God, his people were restored to him greater than before. He shows that he was just when he says that he made partition [170] to his new people and divided his desolated land. He shows that he was generous when he said to Cephalus, after his request for aid: ‘O Athens, ask not help from me, but take it; and consider not the forces which this island holds, and all this state of my possessions, yours doubtfully. We lack

in old age not power, nay, we have superfluity, and the foe is mighty; and the time for giving is right prosperous and [180] without excuse.' Ah, how many things are to note in this answer! But for one with a good understanding it is enough that it be set down here, just as Ovid sets it down. He shows that he was affable when he carefully tells and rehearses to Cephalus in a long discourse the story of the plague of his people and the restoration of them. Wherefore it is manifest enough that four things are suitable to this age; because the noble nature manifests them in it, [190] as the text says. And that the example which has been spoken of may be the more memorable, he says of King Æacus that he was the father of Telamon, or Peleus and of Phocus, of which Telamon sprang Ajax, and of Peleus, Achilles.

75. *Matthew*, x. 8. *Gratis accepistis, gratis date.* 'Freely ye have received, freely give.' It is difficult to see why Dante changed the form of words. If the reading is correct, he must mean, 'I ought to receive for nothing, from you, what it cost you nothing to get'; but the editors very reasonably suspect the text.

101. The fourteenth treatise, the last but one, was to have dealt with justice (compare I. 12 : 86-88), and was also to have contained a discourse on the subject of Allegory (II. 1 : 34-36). This combination identifies the beautiful *Ode XIII.*, *Tre donne intorno al cor mi son venute*, as its text with absolute certainty.

173 ff. The passage is from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, VII. 507-511. Dante's text differs in several minor points from ours, but in the last line he must either have studied a very corrupt manuscript or have made serious errors in expanding the contractions. It is difficult to reconstruct any line which will scan and will at the same time explain his translation.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

[Of what beseems the (4<sup>o</sup>) age of decrepitude, viz., (i.) to return to God as to a haven, and (ii.) to look back upon all the past seasons of life and bless them for what they have brought. Of Lucan's allegory of Marcia and Cato.]

AFTER the section now discoursed upon, we are to proceed to the last, that is to the one which begins : We should return to God with blessings

*Then in the fourth term of life ;*

whereby the text purposes to manifest that which the noble soul doth in her last age, to wit 4<sup>o</sup>.  
decrepitude. And it says that she does two i. ii.  
things ; the one that she returns to God, as to that port whence she departed when she came to enter upon the [10] sea of this life ; the other is that she blesseth the voyage that she hath made, because it hath been straight and good and without the bitterness of tempest. And here be it known that, as Tully says in that *Of Old Age*, 'natural death is as it were our i.  
port and rest from our long voyage.' And even as the good sailor, when he draws near to the port, lowers his sails, and gently with mild impulse enters into it, so [20] ought we to lower the sails of our worldly activities and turn to God with all our purpose and heart ; so that we may come to that port with all sweetness and with all peace. And herein we have a noteworthy instruction in gentleness from our own nature, for in such a death there is not pain nor any bitterness ; but as a ripe apple, lightly and without violence, drops from its branch,

in de- so [30] our soul without pain parts from the  
 crepitude, body wherein it has been. Whence Aristotle  
 in that *Of Youth and Age* says that 'the death  
 that takes place in old age hath no sadness.  
 And as to him who cometh from a long journey  
 ere he enter the gate of his city, the citizens  
 thereof come forth to meet him; so come, and  
 so should come, to meet the noble soul those  
 citizens of the eternal life. And this [40]  
 because of its good deeds and contempla-  
 tions; for when the soul has already been  
 surrendered to God and abstracted from the  
 affairs and thoughts of the world, it seem-  
 to see those whom it believes to be with God.  
 Hearken what Tully says in the person of the  
 ancient Cato: 'I uplift myself in the utmos-  
 yearning to see your fathers whom I loved  
 and not only them, but also those of whom I  
 have heard speak.' The noble soul then sur-  
 renders herself to God in this period, [50] and  
 awaits the end of this life with great longing  
 and seems to herself to be leaving an hostel and  
 returning to her own house, seems to be coming  
 back from a journey and returning to her own  
 city, seems to be coming from the sea and  
 returning to the port. Oh, wretched and vile  
 who with hoisted sails rush into this port, and  
 where ye ought to rest shatter yourselves in the  
 full strength of the wind and lose yourselves in  
 the very place to which ye have made so long a  
 voyage! Verily the knight Lancelot [60] would  
 not enter there with hoisted sails; nor our most  
 noble Latin, Guido of Montefeltro. In truth,  
 these noble ones lowered the sails of the activities  
 of the world; for in their advanced age they gave

themselves to religious orders, putting aside as did every mundane delight and activity. And no one can excuse himself by the tie of marriage which holds him in advanced age; for not only they turn to a religious order who liken themselves in garment and in life to St. Benedict and to St. Augustine, and to St. [70] Francis and to St. Dominic, but to a good and true religious order may they also turn who abide in matrimony, for God would have nought of us in religion save the heart. And therefore St. Paul says to the Romans: 'Not he is a Jew who is so outwardly; nor is that circumcision which is manifested in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is so in secret, and circumcision of the heart, in spirit, not in [80] letter, is circumcision; the praise whereof is not from men but from God.'

And further, the noble soul at this age blesses *ii.* the times past, and well may she bless them; because turning back her memory through them she is mindful of her righteous doings, without which she could not come to the port whereto she is drawing nigh, with so great wealth nor with so great gain. And she doth as the good merchant [90] when, as he draweth nigh to the port, he examineth how he hath prospered, and saith: 'Had I not passed by such a way, this treasure I should not have; nor should I have wherewith to rejoice in my city to which I am drawing nigh'; and therefore he blesseth the way that he hath made.

And that these two things are suitable for this period of life, that great poet Lucan figures forth to us in the second of his *Pharsalia*, [100]

Marcia when he says that Marcia returned to Cato and begged him and prayed that he would take her back again. By which Marcia is understood the noble soul. And we may thus convert the figure to the truth: Marcia was a virgin, and in that state she signifies adolescence; then she came to Cato, and in that state she signifies manhood; then she produced sons, by which are signified those virtues which are declared above to be fitting in the prime of life; and she departed from [110] Cato and married Hortensius, whereby it is signified that the prime of life departs and old age comes. She bore sons also to him, whereby are signified the virtues which are declared above to be fitting in old age. Hortensius died, whereby is signified the end of old age; and Marcia having become a widow (by which widowhood is signified decrepitude), returned at the beginning of her widowhood to Cato, whereby is signified that the [120] noble soul at the beginning of decrepitude returns to God. And what earthly man was more worthy to signify God than Cato? Verily none.

And what says Marcia to Cato? 'Whilst blood was in me,' that is prime manhood, 'whilst the maternal power was in me,' that is to say age, for she is in truth the mother of those other virtues, as has been said above. 'I,' says Marcia, 'did and accomplished [130] all thy commands,' that is to say that the soul abode with constancy in the civic activities. She says: 'I took two husbands,' that is, 'I have been fruitful in two ages.' 'Now,' says Marcia, 'that my womb is wearied and I am exhausted for bearing offspring, to thee I return,



no longer being such as may be given to another to Cato spouse,' that is to say, that the noble soul, knowing that she has no longer any womb for fruit, that is to say when her members feel that they have come to feeble [140] state, returns to God who hath no need of the corporeal members. And Marcia says: 'Grant me the treaties of the ancient couch; give me the name only of marriage,' which is to say that the noble soul saith to God: 'Now give me repose, O my Lord.' She saith: 'Grant me at least that in this so much life as remaineth I may be called thine.' And Marcia saith: 'Two reasons move me to say this: the one is that it may be said after me [150] that I died as Cato's wife; the other is that it may be said after me that thou didst not expel me, but didst give me in marriage of good heart.' By these two reasons the noble soul is moved, and desireth to depart from this life as the spouse of God, and desireth to show that his creature was acceptable to God. Oh wretched and ill-born who prefer to depart from this life under the title of Hortensius rather than of Cato, with whose name [160] it is well to end that which it behoves us to discourse concerning the tokens of nobility, because in him nobility itself shows all its tokens in every age.

64. The Italian *religione* means a religious order. Compare the current expression, 'a religious,' meaning a member of a religious order.

151-153. The whole passage paraphrased here occurs in Lucan's *Pharsalia*, II. 338-345. Cato, in accordance with the facility of divorce that characterised Roman law and manners, had conceded his wife Marcia to his friend

Hortensius. After the latter's death Marcia asked Cato to take her back, that she might die as Cato's wife.

*Nec dubium longo quaeratur in aeuo  
Mutarim primas expulsa an tradita taedas.*

She would not have posterity discuss whether it was for some fault of hers, rather than out of friendship to Hortensius, that Cato had given her in marriage to the latter.

## CHAPTER XXIX

[At the close of his exposition the author deals with two points that may rise:—(i.) May not the descendant of a noble family, though himself base, yet serve as a useful memorial of his ancestry? Which question is answered in the negative. And (ii.) in what secondary sense may a family, which, not being an individual, cannot have a soul nor virtue, yet be called noble?]

**Two questions** Now that the text has been expounded, as also those tokens which appear in the noble man in every age whereby he may be recognised, and without which he may not be, any more than the sun can be without light, or fire without heat, the text at the end of all that has been related about nobleness cries out against the people, and saith: 'O, ye who have hearkened to me,

*See now how many be thus [10] deceived,'*

to wit, these who believe themselves to be noble because they are of famous and ancient generations and descended from excellent fathers, though they have no nobleness in themselves.

[i. ii. And here rise two questions, whereto at the end of this treatise it is well to give heed,

Sir Manfred da Vico, who has now the titles of prætor and prefect, might say: 'Whatsoever I may be, I call to men's minds and represent my ancestors, who by [20] their nobleness earned the office of the prefecture, earned to set their hands to the crowning of the empire, earned the reception of the rose from the Roman pastor. Therefore I ought to receive honour and reverence from the people.' And this is the one question.

De-  
generate  
offspring

The other is that he of San Nazzaro of Pavia, and he of the Piscicelli of Naples might say: 'If nobleness were that which hath been said, to wit a divine seed graciously placed in the human [30] soul, and if no progeny or race hath a soul, as is manifest, no progeny or race could be called noble; and this is counter to the opinion of those who say that our families are the most noble in their cities.'

To the first question Juvenal answers in the i.] eighth *Satire*, when he begins as it were to exclaim: 'What avail these [40] honours which remain from them of old, if he who would fain mantle him therein liveth ill? if he who discourses of his ancestors and sets forth their great and marvellous deeds, is intent on wretched and vile doings? And yet' (says the same satirist), who will call him noble because of his good family, who is himself unworthy of his good family? This is no other than to call a dwarf a giant.' [50] Then afterwards he says to such an one: 'Between thee and a statue, made in memory of thy ancestor, there is nought to choose, save that its head is marble and thine is alive.' But herein (speaking with submission)

of worthy  
forebears I agree not with the poet, for the statue of marble or of wood or of metal, left as a memorial of some worthy man, differeth much in its effect from his unworthy descendant. Because the statue [60] ever confirms the good opinion in those who have heard the fair fame of him whose the statue is, and begets it in others; whereas the worthless son or grandson does just the reverse; for he weakens the opinion of those who have heard good of his ancestry; for a thought will come to them and say: 'It may not be that all which is said of this man's ancestors is true, since we see such a plant [70] of their sowing.' Wherefore he should receive not honour but dishonour who beareth ill-witness of the good. And therefore Tully saith that 'the son of the worthy man should strive to bear good witness to his father.' Wherefore, in my judgment, even as he who defames a worthy man deserves to be shunned by folk and not hearkened to, so the vile man, descended from worthy ancestors, deserves to be [80] expelled by all. And the good man should shut his eyes so as not to look upon this reproach which reproaches the goodness that remains only in memory. And let this suffice for the present for the first question which was mooted.

- [ii. To the second question may be answered that a family in itself hath not a soul; and yet it is true that it is called noble, and, in a certain sense, so it is. Wherefore be it known that every [90] whole is composed of its parts; and there are some wholes which have one simple essence together with their parts; as in one man there is one essence of the whole and of each of its

parts; and what is said to exist in the part is said in the same sense to exist in the whole. There are other wholes which have not a common essence with their parts, like a heap of grain; the essence of such is secondary, resulting from many grains which [100] have true and primary essence in themselves. And the qualities of the parts are said to exist in such a whole, in the same secondary sense in which it has an essence. Wherefore a heap is called white because the grains whereof the heap is composed are white. In truth this whiteness is rather in the grains, primarily, and comes out as the result in the whole heap secondarily; and thus in a secondary sense it may be called white. And it is in this sense that a family or a [110] race can be called noble. Wherefore be it known that as the white grains must preponderate to make a white heap, so to make a noble race the noble persons must preponderate in it. I say preponderate, that is, exceed in number, so that their goodness by its fame may overshadow and conceal the contrary which is in it. And just as from a white heap of grain you might remove the wheat grain by grain, and grain by grain [120] substitute red millet till the whole heap at last would change its colour, so out of a noble race the good might die one by one, and worthless be born into it until it should change its name, and should not deserve to be called noble but base. And let this suffice as answer to the second question.

14. Compare IV. 1: 62-65, *note*.

23. *The rose*. Leo IX. (1049-1054 A.D.) introduced the custom of blessing a (golden) rose on Palm Sunday

Noble  
families

and sending it as a mark of favour to some city, church, or distinguished personage (Didron).

89 f. There are wholes which have an independent existence, such as the body. If I have a pain in my hand I have a pain in my body, and the hand is not properly a hand, and cannot perform the functions of such, unless it is part of the body. But there are other wholes which are mere aggregates, and have no existence of their own except in a secondary sense.

## CHAPTER XXX

[(c) The tornata. And how nobleness is beloved of philosophy.]

The *As* is set forth above in the third chapter of this *tornata* treatise, this ode has three chief parts; wherefore, since two of them have been discoursed upon, whereof the first begins in the aforesaid chapter and the second in the sixteenth (so that the first is completed in thirteen and the second in fourteen chapters, not counting the proem of the treatise on the ode, which is comprised in [10] two chapters), we are now in this thirtieth *c.* and last chapter to discuss briefly the third chief division, which was composed as the *tornata* of this ode, for a kind of adornment, and which begins:

*Against the erring ones take thou thy way,  
my ode.*

And here, to begin with, be it known that every good workman on the completion of his work should ennoble and beautify it as much as he may, that it may leave [20] his hands the more noted

and the more precious. And this it is my purpose to do in this section, not that I am a good workman, but that I aspire after being such. I say then: Noble-  
ness the  
friend

*Against the erring ones, and the rest.*

This 'Against the erring ones,' etc., is a whole section, and it is the name of this ode, chosen after the example of the good brother Thomas of Aquino, who gave the name *Against the* [30] *Gentiles* to a book of his which he made to the confusion of all those who depart from our faith.

I say then 'take thou thy way' as though I should say: 'thou art now complete, and it is time no longer to stand still, but to go, for thy emprise is great.'

*And when thou shalt be in the region  
where our lady is,*

tell her thy business. Where, be it noted, that (as saith our Lord) pearls must not be cast before swine, because it does them no good and is loss [40] to the pearls; and (as saith the poet, Æsop in the first *Fable*) a grain of corn is more profit to a cock than a pearl, and therefore he leaves the one and picks up the other. And, considering this, I caution and command the ode to reveal its business where this lady, to wit philosophy, shall be found. And there shall this most noble lady be found where her treasure-house is to be found, to wit the soul [50] wherein she harbours. And this philosophy not only harbours in the sages, but also, as was shown above in another treatise, wherever the love of her harbours. And to such I tell my ode to reveal its business, because to them its teaching



of philo- will be profitable, and by them it will be re-  
sophy ceived.

And I say to it : Declare to this lady :

*I go discoursing of a friend of thine.*

Truly [60] nobility is a friend of hers, for so much doth the one love the other that nobleness ever demands her, and philosophy turns not her most sweet regards in any other direction. Oh how great and beauteous adornment is this which at the end of this ode is given to her, calling her the friend of her whose true abode is in the most secret place of the divine mind !

40. This story is given in the *Fabulae Aesopiae* of Phaedrus, III. xii.

52 f. *In another treatise.* See III. 11, especially lines 41-44 and 122-124.

## ANALYTICAL NOTE

No device can make it easy to follow the intricate system of divisions and sub-divisions, broken by digressions, which characterises the *Convivio*. But it is hoped that the marginal letters and numbers introduced into this edition may make it possible.

Perhaps greater consistency might have been observed in these marginalia, but the editor hopes that the inconsistencies may have facilitated some degree of simplification.

Chapter I. is introductory, and has its own **The First** (quite simple) system of divisions and cross **Treatise** divisions.

Hindrances are	internal	bodily defects (to be pitied)
		moral defects (to be condemned)
	external	pressure of domestic and public duties (genuine and to be pitied)
		lack of opportunity of study (a pretext, and to be con- demned)

The invitation to the banquet would be extended in vain to those suffering (whether by their own fault or not) from internal defect; but is given to all those (whether free from

blame or not) whom external necessity or contracted sloth has kept from the feast of reason.

In Chapters II.-XIII. (i. ii. . . .) are subordinate to ( $\alpha, \beta$  . . .), these to ( $a, b$  . . .), and these to (I., II.).

The main division is into (I.) the apology for the contents of the work, beginning on p. 9, and (II.) the apology for the language in which it is written, p. 22.

The subdivisions offer no difficulty, but it may be noted that, under (II.), the divisions ( $b$ ) on zealous generosity, p. 36, and ( $c$ ) on the author's love of his native language, p. 44, run in two parallel sections each, indicated by  $b_1, b_2$ , and  $c_1, c_2$ , each with its subsections.

If the reader likes to work out the whole of this system in tabular form (after the fashion of the analysis of Chapter I. above), he will find that it throws much light on Dante's ways of working and thinking, and will give him a very clear idea of the articulation of the whole of the *Convivio*.

The Second Treatise      The divisions of Chapter I. explain themselves. The marginal figures and letters do not conform to the system followed in the rest of the treatise.

In Chapters II.-XII., dealing with the literal interpretation of the ode, small Roman numerals (i., ii. . . .) are subordinate to Greek letters ( $\alpha, \beta$  . . .), Greek letters to Italics ( $a, b$  . . .), and Italics to large Roman numerals (I., II. . . .).

The main division is into (I.) the invoca-

tion, beginning on p. 69; (II.), the conflict, p. 93, and (III.), the tornata, p. 108.

The invocation (I.) embraces (*b*) the treatment of the heavens, p. 70, and (*a*) the treatment of the movers of the heavens, p. 77; (*b*) preceding (*a*), and each having subdivisions.

The conflict (II.) deals with (*a*) the conflicting parties, p. 93, namely ( $\alpha$ ), the soul, p. 94, and ( $\beta$ ) the new spirit of love, p. 95; and (*b*) the conflicting pleas, p. 96, namely ( $\alpha$ ) the soul's plea, p. 101, and ( $\beta$ ) the spirit's plea, p. 104.

In Chapters XIII.-XVI., dealing with the allegorical interpretation, (I., II.) correspond to (I., II.), and (*a*, *b*) to (*a*, *b*). The division is not much elaborated. (I.) begins on p. 110, and (II.) on p. 131.

The system is the same as that of the second The  
Third  
Treatise  
treatise.

After a short introduction (i., ii., iii.) we have the main division into (I.) proem, p. 141, (II.) praise of my lady philosophy, p. 157, and (III.) explanation of a seeming contradiction, p. 185.

Each of these divisions is subdivided (*a*, *b* . . .), but in (I.), before we come to (*a*), p. 151, we have to consider (i.) love, p. 142, (ii.) the mind, p. 144, and (iii.) degrees of love, p. 148.

The reader is to note, therefore, that on the margins of this treatise (i., ii., iii.) twice appear in a prefatory or parenthetical capacity, and not as subordinate to ( $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$  . . .).

The allegorical treatment follows the literal. (I.) begins on p. 202 and (II.) on p. 203.

The Fourth Treatise In this treatise (*i*<sup>o</sup>, *ii*<sup>o</sup> . . .) are subordinate to (*i*, *ii* . . .), these to (*1*<sup>o</sup>, *2*<sup>o</sup> . . .), these to (*i*, *ii* . . .), these, as in the second and third treatises, to ( $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$  . . .), these to (*a*, *b* . . .), and these to (I., II.).

The main division is into (I.) the proem, p. 233, and (II.) the treatise, p. 238.

But certain portions of the work (pp. 241-257, 263-273, 280-296, 330-340, 376-379), being parenthetical or supplementary or running parallel to the main scheme, have been treated apart, on systems that explain themselves, the marginal indices being clamped in a bracket (□).

The proem need not be further analysed here. The treatise (II.) is divided into (*a*) the examination of false opinions, p. 239; (*b*) the elaboration of the true opinion, p. 309; and (*c*) the tornata, p. 380.

(*a*) falls into ( $\alpha$ ) the statement, p. 239, and ( $\beta$ ) the refutation, p. 276; (irregularly anticipated, for reasons given, on p. 259).

( $\alpha$ ) needs no further analysis.

( $\beta$ ) the refutation falls into the treatment (i.) of riches, p. 277, and (ii.) of time, p. 298; (ii.) is not further divided, but (i.) falls into successive divisions and subdivisions that explain themselves.

(*b*), p. 309, the elaboration of the true theory, falls into the treatment ( $\alpha$ ) of the nature, p. 310, and ( $\beta$ ) of the manifestations, p. 342, of nobleness. Of these—

( $\alpha$ ) resolves itself into (i.) preliminary

inquiries (1<sup>o</sup>, 2<sup>o</sup>), p. 310, and (ii.), the definition itself, p. 313. But this (ii.) again falls into (1<sup>o</sup>) certain reflections on the virtues (*i.*, *ii.*, *iii.*), p. 314, and (2<sup>o</sup>) the direct examination of nobleness (*i.*, *ii.*), p. 321.

- (β) The manifestations of nobleness, p. 342, are treated as (i.) general, p. 342, and (ii.) specific to the several ages, p. 342, which latter treatment is subdivided, under four heads (1<sup>o</sup>, 2<sup>o</sup>, 3<sup>o</sup>, 4<sup>o</sup>), into special graces (*i.*, *ii.* . . .), and, in one case, p. 356, into varieties *i*<sup>o</sup>, *ii*<sup>o</sup> . . .).

(c) needs no special analysis.

By expanding this note after the models on p. 383, and pp. 443, 444, the reader can present to his eye the whole material of the fourth treatise, apart from parentheses, in tabular form.

A line for line translation of the eleven odes, on which we assume (see p. 7) that the eleven unwritten books of the *Convivio* would have commented, here follows. It is accompanied by a few short notes; but they are no more than hints, and the student will be left very much to his own resources in studying these often difficult poems. An adequate commentary would be beyond the scope of this work.

The punctuation is simplified as far as possible, in order to make the commas, when introduced, helpful as a grammatical commentary.

My friend Mr. Edmund Gardner has, with great generosity, supplied me with a number of MS. readings which I have adopted (often silently) in preference to those of the printed texts. I can only hope that students who observe them will feel a quickened interest in Mr. Gardner's long-projected edition of the *Canzoni*, with translation and commentary, which, it is to be hoped, will not be much longer delayed.

## ODE IV

[? Text of the projected fifth treatise.]

*Amor che muovi tua virtù dal cielo.*

### I

LOVE who dost launch thy power from the heaven, as  
doth the sun his splendour, for there his worth is appre-  
hended most where his ray most nobility encounters;  
And as he puts to flight darkness and chill, so,  
lofty Sire, dost thou drive baseness from the heart of  
men, nor can wrath make long stand against thee: [8]

From thee must every blessing needs arise  
For which the whole world travaileth: without thee



perishes all potency in us of doing well ;<sup>1</sup> e'en as  
 a painting in a darksome place, which may not mani-  
 fest itself nor give delight of colour nor of art. [15]

## II

Upon my heart thy light doth ever strike as on a  
 star the ray,<sup>2</sup> since when my soul became the hand-  
 maiden of thy power at the first :

Whence hath its life a longing that leadeth me with  
 its persuasive speech to gaze again upon each beauteous  
 thing with more delight in measure as 'tis winsome.<sup>3</sup>

[23]

By power of this my gaze, into my mind

A damsel has entered who has captured me ; and in  
 flame has kindled me as water by its clearness kindles  
 flame :<sup>4</sup> because, when she approached, those rays of  
 thine wherewith thou dost make me glow all  
 rose up in her eyes. [30]

## III

Even as in her being she is beauteous, and noble in  
 her features<sup>5</sup> and amorous, so does imagination, rest-  
 ing not, adorn her in the mind wherein I bear her :

Not that it<sup>6</sup> is subtle in itself as for a thing so  
 lofty, but from thy might it hath it that it dares be-  
 yond the power nature hath proffered us. [38<sup>1</sup>]

Her beauty is thy worth's accretitor,

In that effect may be estimated upon a worthy sub-  
 ject, in fashion as the sun is fire's ensign though  
 giving not nor reaving from it power, but making it,  
 in lofty region, reveal more saving force in its effect.<sup>7</sup>

[45]

<sup>1</sup> All good is but a latent potency, till evoked by love, and therefore without love it perishes.

<sup>2</sup> The sun's ray, from which all stars derive their light.

<sup>3</sup> The heart smitten with love loves all lovely things in the proportion of their love-worthiness.

<sup>4</sup> When a glass sphere, filled with water, is used as a burning glass.

<sup>5</sup> Italian, *atti*=features, facial expression, attitude, bearing or gestures.

<sup>6</sup> The mind.

<sup>7</sup> The sun does not create the power of fire, but reveals it. So this maid the power of love.

## IV

Then, Sire, of such gentle nature that this nobility, which cometh down to us, and all other excellence taketh its source from thy loftiness;

Have regard unto my life, how hard it is, and take pity on it; for thy burning, by her beauty, maketh me have at heart excess of anguish. [53]

Love, of thy sweetness, make her feel

The great yearning that I have to behold her: nor suffer not that she, by glory of her strength,<sup>1</sup> lead me to death; for not yet is she aware how she doth please, nor how mightily I love her, nor how she bears my peace within her eyes. [60]

## V

Great honour shall it be to thee if thou aid me, and rich gift to me, in measure as I know full well, who find me at such point where I may not defend my life;

For my spirits<sup>2</sup> are assailed by such an one that I deem not, save I have succour through thy will, that they can keep their stand and perish not. [68]

And thy potency, moreover, shall be felt

By this fair lady, who is worthy of it; for it seems as it were fitting to give to her great store of every good, as unto one born into the world to hold lordship over the mind of all who look upon her. [75]

## ODE V

[? Text of the projected sixth treatise.]

*Io sento sì d'amor la gran possanza.*

## I

So do I feel the mighty power of love that I may not endure long to support it; which is grievous to me:<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Glory of her strength.* Italian, *giovanezza*.

<sup>2</sup> *I.e.*, my vital powers.

<sup>3</sup> Because if it kills him he will no longer be able to serve his lady.

For so does his might keep growing and mine I feel  
to fail so, that hour by hour I am enfeebled from my  
wont. [6]

I say not that love works more than I desire,

For if he wrought all that my will demands such  
power as nature gave me would support it not, in that it  
is finite: and this it is whence I pluck sorrow, that  
power will not keep faith with purpose, but if from  
goodwill springs reward, I demand it, for furtherance  
of life, of those eyes whose beauteous splendour  
brings comfort whensoever I taste of pain. [16]

## II

The rays of these beauteous eyes enter into mine  
enamoured ones, and bring the sweet whenas I taste  
the bitter:

And they know the way, even as such who erst have  
traversed it; and they know the spot where they left  
love [22]

When through my eyes they led him in.

Wherefore when they turn on me they do mercy, and  
to her whose I am they purchase loss when they hide  
themselves from me, who so love her that only to serve  
her do I hold myself dear: and my musings, compact  
merely of love, as to their goal hie them to her  
service: wherefore to perform the same I long so  
greatly that did I believe I might accomplish it by  
fleeing her it were an easy thing to do; but I know  
that I should die thereby. [32]

## III

'Tis very love indeed that hath captured me and  
mightily indeed he grips me since I would do that  
which I say for him.

For no love is of such weight as is that which of  
death makes a man taste for good service of another:  
[38]

And in such will was I confirmed

So soon as the great longing which I feel was born,  
by virtue of the pleasure which gathers from all good

in the fair countenance.            A servant am I, and when I  
 bethink me whose,            and what she is, I am utterly  
 content ;            for a man may serve well against good  
 pleasure ;<sup>1</sup>            and if unripeness bereaves me of grace,            I  
 look to the time which shall grasp more reason ;            if but  
 my life shall hold her own so long.            [48]

## IV

When I muse upon a noble longing,<sup>2</sup> born            of  
 that great longing which I bear,            that draws all my  
 powers to well-doing,  
 Meseems that I am overpayed with grace ;            and in  
 like manner more than wrongly            meseems I bear the  
 name of servant ;            [54]

So, before her eyes, of pleasure

Is serving made, thanks to a not-my<sup>3</sup> goodness.            Yet  
 since I hold me close knit to truth            needs must such  
 longing count as service ;            because if I make haste to  
 be of worth            I ponder not so much on what concerns  
 myself            as her, who hath me in her power ;            for I  
 so do in order that her cause may be more prized ;<sup>4</sup>            and  
 I am wholly hers ; so do I esteem myself            because love  
 hath made me worthy of so great honour.            [64]

## V

Other than love could not have made me such            as to  
 be, worthily,            aught that pertains to her, the unen-  
 amoured,

Who takes her stand as a lady whom concerns not            the  
 amorous mind            that without her may not pass an hour.            [70]

Not yet so many times have I beheld her

But that new beauty I may find in her ;            whence love  
 makes grow his greatness in me            in measure as new  
 joy is added.            Wherefore it comes about that so long  
 do I abide            in one state, and so long doth love lime

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, against the good pleasure of her whom he serves.

<sup>2</sup> The desire himself to become more worthy.

<sup>3</sup> A goodness not mine, but hers, my lady's.

<sup>4</sup> My very desire to be more worthy is itself a service rendered to her, since it is only for her credit that I cherish it.

me with one torment and with one sweetness, as  
 lasts that season that so often goads me which endures  
 from when I lose the sight of her until the time when  
 it be won again.<sup>1</sup> [80]

*Tornata*

My beauteous ode, if thou be like to me, thou wilt  
 not be scornful so much as cometh<sup>2</sup> to thy excellence :  
 Wherefore I pray thee that thou ply thy wit, my  
 sweet amorous one, in culling mode and way that shall  
 become thee. [86]

Should cavalier invite thee or arrest,

E'er thou yield thyself to his pleasure see if thou  
 canst make him of thy sect ; and if it may not be,  
 straightway abandon him, for the good keeps chamber  
 ever with the good. But it chances that one often  
 throws himself into a company whence he has nought  
 save smirch of evil fame that men proclaim of  
 him. With the guilty sojourn not by wit nor art ; for  
 never was it wisdom yet to hold their side. [96]

[Alternative *tornata*]

[Ode ! to the three least vicious of our city thou  
 shalt take thy way e'er thou go otherwhither : salute  
 the two : and see to it that thou try the third, to draw  
 him first out of ill company. Tell him the good joins  
 not in conflict with the good rather than win emprise  
 against the wicked : tell him that he is mad who  
 fleeth not, for fear of shame, from madness ; for  
 he feareth who hath terror of the evil ; therefore  
 fleeing the one healeth the other.<sup>3</sup>]

<sup>1</sup> Then he sees new beauties, and his state (both torment and rapture) is changed for another.

<sup>2</sup> The lofty meaning of this ode might naturally bring it the pride of conscious superiority ; but the humble poet urges it not to presume thereon, but carefully to choose its company.

<sup>3</sup> No man fears shame unless, by shameful conduct, he subjects himself to the terror of it. Thus, if we once defy the wickedness of our evil associates, we shall find that their taunts have lost their power to shame us. The specific allusions of this *tornata* have never been deciphered.

## ODE VI

[Text of the projected seventh treatise.]

*Così nel mio parlar voglio esser aspro.*

## I

As harsh in my discourse would I fain be as in her  
bearing is that beauteous stone whom, every hour,  
petrify more hardness and more cruel nature :

And she clothes her person in an adamant such that  
for it, or for that she arrests her, there issues not from  
quiver arrow that can ever catch her naked.<sup>1</sup> [8]

But she slays ; and it avails not for a man to case him

Nor to flee from the mortal blows ; for as had  
they wings they light on folk and shatter every  
armour : wherefore, to protect me from her, I have nor  
wit nor power. [13]

## II

I find no shield she may not shatter for me nor place  
to hide me from her vision ; but as the flower on the  
spray so does she hold the summit of my mind.

She seems as much to heed my misery as a craft  
does a sea that uplifts no wave : the weight that sinks  
me is such as no rhyme may hold in poise. [21]

Oh agonising and un pitying file,

That dumbly scrap'st away my life, how is it that  
thou shrinkest not from gnawing thus my heart, coat  
within coat, as I from telling folk who he is that gives  
thee power thereto ? [26]

## III

For my heart more trembles when I think of her, in  
such region that folk may thither direct their eyes, for  
fear that through should shine my thought externally  
so as to be discovered,

Than I do at death, who every sense already crunches  
with the teeth of love : which as I muse scorches so  
their<sup>2</sup> powers that their working slackens. [34]

<sup>1</sup> No arrow can ever find an unprotected place ; because she is cased in proof, and because she never passively awaits attack or offers herself as a mark.

<sup>2</sup> The powers of the senses.

He has smitten me to earth and stands over me

With that same sword wherewith he slaughtered  
Dido, Love to whom I cry and call for grace  
and humbly pray, and he seems set to refuse all grace.  
[39]

## IV

He, ever and anon, uplifts his hand and defies this  
my weak life, in his perversity; and, outstretched and  
overthrown, he pins me to the earth, exhausted past a  
quiver.

Then rise up shrieks within my mind, and the  
blood all scattered through the veins flees running  
towards the heart that summons it, and I lie bleached  
of it. [47]

He smites me under the left side

So rudely that the pain re-echoes through my  
heart; then do I cry: 'Should he uplift one  
other time, death will have closed me in e'er down his  
blow descends.' [52]

## V

So might I see him to the centre cleave the cruel  
one's heart who quarters mine! Then were no longer  
black to me the death to which I hasten through her  
beauty.

For she smites as hard in sun as shade this mur-  
derous assassin and robber. Oh me, that she howls  
not for me as I for her in the hot caldron. [60]

For swiftly would I cry: 'I succour thee,'

And eagerly would do it, e'en as one who upon  
those fair locks that love has crisped and goldened to  
consume me would set my hand and then would sate  
myself. [65]

## VI

Had I seized the fair locks that have become my  
scourge and lash, laying hold of them e'er  
tierce with them would I pass vesper and evening  
bells:

And would be nor pitiful nor courteous, but were  
rather as the bear taking his sport. And if love



scourges me therewith<sup>1</sup> I would take more than thousand vengeance. [73]

Still on those eyes whence issue forth the sparks

Which set on flame the heart I carry slain close  
would I gaze and fixedly to avenge me for that he<sup>2</sup>  
makes me flee: and then would I render her peace  
with love. [78]

*Tornata*

Ode, take thy way straight to that lady who hath  
smitten me and slain, and who robs from me that for  
which most I thirst, and with an arrow drive thou at  
her heart; for fair honour is acquired in accomplishing  
revenge.<sup>3</sup>

ODE VII

[? Text of the projected eighth treatise.]

*Al poco giorno ed al gran cerchio d'ombra.*<sup>4</sup>

I

To the short day and the great sweep of shadow<sup>5</sup> have  
I come, ah me, and to the whitening of the hills when  
colour vanishes from the grass. And my longing  
changes not, for that, its green<sup>6</sup> so is it barbed in the  
hard stone that speaks and hears as though it were a  
woman. [6]

II

And in like fashion<sup>7</sup> does this wondrous woman stand  
chill like snow beneath the shadow; for no more  
moves her than a stone the sweet season that warms  
the hills and brings them back from white to  
green in that it covers them with flowers and grass. [12]

<sup>1</sup> See line 67, but the reading is doubtful.

<sup>2</sup> Love.

<sup>3</sup> And since she has scorned Love, the quarrel is his.

<sup>4</sup> This poem is a *Sestina*. The lines of each verse end in *ombra*, *colli*, *erba*, *verde*, *pietra*, *donna*; and as to order the endings in each stanza are successively those of lines 6, 1, 5, 2, 4, 3 of the preceding stanza. *Pietra* is used for 'rock,' 'stone' and 'gem,' and *erba* for 'grass' and 'medicinal herb.' But the renderings 'stone' and 'grass' have been preserved throughout, and the reader will perhaps make shift to accept them.

<sup>5</sup> Midwinter.

<sup>6</sup> Loses not its vigour.

<sup>7</sup> She is no more melted by spring than the poet is chilled by winter, hence she is *nuova*, *i.e.*, unlike other women, 'wondrous.'

## III

When on her head she bears a wreath of grass she  
 banishes from our mind each other woman, for the  
 waving gold is mingled with the green so beauteous  
 that love comes there to sojourn in the shadow, who  
 hath riveted me between the little hills more fast by  
 far than calcined stone. [18]

## IV

Her beauty has more virtue than a stone, and her  
 stroke may not be healed by grass for I have fled o'er  
 plains and hills that I might escape from such like  
 woman; and against her light might not give me  
 shadow mountain nor ever wall nor leaf of green. [24]

## V

Erst have I seen her clad in green in such guise  
 she would have planted in a stone the love I bear even  
 to her very shadow; wherefore I have wooed her in  
 a beauteous field of grass, enamoured as was ever  
 woman,<sup>1</sup> and girt<sup>2</sup> around with loftiest hills. [30]

## VI

But of a truth the rivers would return to the hills or  
 e'er this log, sap-full and green, would catch a flame  
 (after the wont of fair woman) from me, who would  
 endure to sleep on stone all of my life, and go pastur-  
 ing on grass, only to look where her garments cast a  
 shadow. [36]

When the hills cast the blackest shadow, under the  
 beauteous green the youthful woman makes it  
 vanish like a stone hidden by grass. [39]

<sup>1</sup> The grass was love-laden, and the promptings of love issued from it as from a beauteous woman.

<sup>2</sup> Agreeing with 'field,' not 'grass.'

## ODE VIII

[? Text of the projected ninth treatise.]

*Amor, tu vedi ben che questa donna.*<sup>1</sup>

## I

LOVE, thou perceivest that this lady heeds not thy  
 power at any season, which of the other fair ones is  
 wont to make itself the mistress. And when she per-  
 ceived that she was my mistress, by thy ray that on my  
 face shines, of all cruelty she made herself the mis-  
 tress; so that it seems not she has the heart of  
 woman, but of whatever beast has of love greatest  
 chill. For through the warm season and through the  
 chill she shows me the semblance of a woman who  
 should be made of beauteous stone by hand of such as  
 should best carve in stone. [12]

## II

And I who am unshaken more than rock in obeying  
 thee, for the beauty of a woman, bear concealed the  
 stroke of the stone with which thou didst smite upon  
 me, as on a stone that had offended thee long  
 season, in such guise as to reach my heart, where I  
 am stone. And never was discovered any stone, or  
 by virtue of the sun or by his light which had so  
 much of virtue or of light as to have power to aid me  
 against that stone so that it should not lead me with  
 its chill to where I shall be dead with chill. [24]

## III

Sire, thou knowest that by freezing chill the water  
 turns to crystal rock there under the north, where is  
 the great chill; and the air ever into the element of  
 chill<sup>2</sup> there so converts itself that water is mis-  
 tress in that region, by reason of the chill. So be-

<sup>1</sup> This composition, which is a modification of the *Sestina*, is built upon the five endings *donna, tempo, luce, freddo, pietra*. Uniformity of rendering would involve too great violence to the usages of our language, as well as much obscurity. *Donna* is rendered by 'lady' 'woman' and 'mistress'; *tempo* by 'season' 'life' and 'time'; *luce* (which is generally a noun, but sometimes a verb) by 'shines' 'light' 'eye' 'sight'; *freddo* always by 'chill'; *pietra* by 'stone' and 'rock'

<sup>2</sup> Water.

fore the semblance chill freezes my blood ever in every  
 season: and that thought which most shortens my  
 life is all converted into moisture chill, which  
 issues then through the midst of the eye by which there  
 entered the dispiteous light. [36]

IV

In her is gathered all beauty's light; and in like  
 fashion all cruelty's chill runs to her heart, whither  
 pierces not thy light. Wherefore in my eyes so beau-  
 teous does she shine, when I look on her, that  
 I see her in the rock or wheresoever else I turn  
 my sight. From her eyes there comes to me  
 the sweet light that makes me heedless of each  
 other woman. Ah would that she were a more pite-  
 ous lady towards me, who seek, in darkness and  
 in light, only for serving her the place and sea-  
 son, nor for aught else desire to live long season. [48]

V

Wherefore, O power who art earlier than time, ear-  
 lier than motion or than sense-felt light, take pity upon  
 me who have such evil season. Enter now into her  
 heart, for in truth 'tis season, so that by thee there pass  
 forth from her the chill, which suffers me not, like  
 others, to have my season: for if there overtake me  
 thy strong season<sup>1</sup> in this such state, that noble  
 rock will see me lying in a narrow stone<sup>2</sup> never  
 to raise me till has come the season<sup>3</sup> when I shall  
 see if ever was fair lady in the world like unto this  
 bitter lady. [60]

*Tornata*

Ode, I bear in my mind a lady such that, for all she  
 be to me of stone, she gives me hardihood where me-  
 seems every man is chill; so that I dare to make for  
 this chill<sup>4</sup> the new thing that through thy form gives  
 light which never was conceived in any season.

<sup>1</sup> Spring.

<sup>2</sup> A sarcophagus.

<sup>3</sup> The resurrection, when all beauty may be seen and compared.

<sup>4</sup> In celebration of the chill lady.

## ODE IX

[? Text of the projected tenth treatise.]

*Io son venuto al punto della rota.*

## I

I HAVE come to the point of the wheel where the  
horizon when the sun declines yields up the twinned  
heaven ;<sup>1</sup>

And the star of love is severed from us by the shin-  
ing ray that enforks her so athwart as to become her  
veil : [6]

And that planet that strengthens the cold

Displays himself to us full on the great circle<sup>2</sup> where-  
from each of the seven<sup>3</sup> casts shortest shadow. And  
yet discharges not one single thought of love wherewith  
I am laden my mind,<sup>4</sup> which is harder than a  
stone in holding firm the image of stone. [13]

## II

Rising from the sand of Ethiopia an alien wind dis-  
turbs the air by reason of the sun's sphere that is now  
burning it,<sup>5</sup>

And passes the ocean, whence it leads us store of  
such cloud that if another baffle it not this hemisphere  
it all closes up and seals, [19]

And then resolves, and falls in white flakes

Of chill snow and of grievous shower, whence  
the air is saddened all and weeps. And love who  
his nets draws back on high for the beating  
wind abandons not me ; so beauteous is the  
lady, this cruel one, who is given me for my lady. [26]

## III

Fled is every bird that followeth the heat from that  
region of Europe that loses not the seven chill stars  
ever ;<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The sign of the Twins rises at sunset. It is midwinter.

<sup>2</sup> The meridian.

<sup>3</sup> Planets.

<sup>4</sup> 'My mind' is the subject of 'discharges.'

<sup>5</sup> It being midsummer there, in the southern hemisphere.

<sup>6</sup> The regions to which the Great Bear never sets.

And the rest have set a truce upon their voices, no  
 more to sound them till the green season, unless  
 it be by cause of wailing ;

And all animals that are wanton

In their nature, are discharged from love, because  
 the chill deadens their spirit. And mine beareth the  
 more of love ; for my sweet musings are not reft from  
 me, nor are not given me, by revolving season, but  
 a lady gives them me of but short season. <sup>1</sup> [39]

## IV

Passed their limit have the leaves that the virtue of the  
 Ram drew forth to adorn the world, and dead is all the  
 grass.

No branch conceals itself in green save laurel or pine  
 or fir and such other as preserves its verdure : [45]

And so hard and bitter is the season

That it slays upon the slopes the flowers that have  
 not power to endure the frost. And the amorous  
 thorn love, for all that, draws not from out my  
 heart ; for I am fixed ever to bear it the while  
 I am in life, although I lived for ever. [52]

## V

The veins pour forth the steaming waters by reason  
 of the vapours earth holdeth in her womb, who draweth  
 them up aloft from the abyss ;

Whereby the path that pleased me in fair weather has  
 now become a river, and will be, whilst the winter's  
 great assault shall last. [58]

The earth makes one seeming-cemented floor,

And the dead water turns to glass by reason of the  
 cold that locks it from without. And I from my war-  
 fare have not, for that, drawn back one step, nor  
 would draw back ; for if torment be sweet death must  
 surpass all other sweetness. [65]

<sup>1</sup> A youthful lady.

*Tornata*

My ode, what now will come of me, in the next sweet  
 season of renewal, when rains love upon the earth from  
 all the heavens ; if throughout these frosts love is  
 in me alone and no other where? That will come to me  
 which comes to a man of marble if in the maiden, for  
 a heart, be marble. [72]

## O D E X

[? Text of the projected eleventh treatise.]

*E' m' incresce di me si duramente.*

## I

I HAVE ruth for myself so cruelly that as much suffer-  
 ing is furnished me by the pity as by the pain :  
 Ah me ! that dolorously I feel, against my  
 will, the breath of the last sigh gathering [6]

Within the heart that the beauteous eyes smote

When love opened them with his own hands to lead  
 me to the season that undoes me. Oh me ! how  
 gentle, tender and sweet did they lift themselves upon  
 me when they began the death that is now so  
 grievous to me, saying : ' Our light brings peace.' [14]

## II

' Peace will we give thy heart, to thee delight,' said  
 to my eyes, time was, those of the beauteous lady ;  
 But when, of their intelligence, they learned that by  
 her might my mind was now wholly reft from me, [20]

With love's ensigns they wheeled about,

So that their victorious spectacle was not beheld again  
 one single time. Whence is left mourning my soul  
 that looked for solace from them : and now all but  
 dead doth she<sup>1</sup> behold the heart to whom she was  
 espoused, and must needs depart love-smitten. [28]

<sup>1</sup> The soul, personified throughout the next two stanzas.



## III

Love-smitten she goes weeping on her way beyond  
 this life, she the disconsolate, for love expels her.  
 She departs thence<sup>1</sup>, so grieving that, e'er she  
 goes, her maker hearkeneth with pity to her. [34]

She hath gathered herself, midmost the heart,  
 Together with that life which remains quenched only  
 at the moment when she wends her way:<sup>2</sup> and there  
 utters her complaint of love, who from this world ex-  
 pels her: and many a time embraces the spirits  
 that still weep, that they are losing their companion. [42]

## IV

The image of this lady sits yet in my mind where  
 love established her, being her guide:  
 And it irks her not of the woe which she beholds, nay  
 rather is she far more beauteous now than e'er before,  
 and far more joyously she seems to smile: [48]

And lifts her eyes that slay, and cries  
 Over her<sup>3</sup> who weeps that she must go: 'Get gone,  
 thou wretch, now get thee forth!' And this cry is  
 caught up by the yearning<sup>4</sup> which assails me after its  
 wont albeit the smart is less; for greatly hath  
 the power of feeling waned, and draweth nearer to the  
 end of woes. [56]

## V

The day whereon she came into the world, as stands  
 recorded in memory's book that wanes,  
 My infant person sustained a passion never  
 known such that I remained fulfilled with terror. [62]

<sup>1</sup> From life.

<sup>2</sup> The soul, having a moment's respite granted by the Creator's pity, rallies the flickering powers of life, that shall not be finally quenched till the actual moment of her departure.

<sup>3</sup> The soul.

<sup>4</sup> The lady herself, love, the image of the lady in the poet's mind, and his own yearning towards her, are successively regarded as the power that exiles his soul, *i.e.*, that slays him.

For on my every power a curb was set

So suddenly that down I fell to earth by reason of a  
light that smote me at the heart. And, if the book errs  
not, the main spirit<sup>1</sup> trembled so mightily that  
well it seemed as though death was reached in this  
world by him. Now he<sup>2</sup> who set this moving has ruth  
of it. [70]

## VI

Then when appeared to me the great beauty which  
so makes me mourn, ye gentle ladies to whom I have  
addressed me,

That power that has most nobility<sup>3</sup> gazing upon the  
joy perceived right well that its woe was born: [76]

And recognised the longing that had been created

By the intent gaze that she<sup>4</sup> wrought; so that she  
then said, weeping, to the others:<sup>5</sup> 'Here shall arrive,  
to hold vicarious sway, the beauteous form of one  
whom I have seen, who even now strikes me with  
terror, and shall be lady over all of us, so soon  
as it be the pleasure of her eyes.' [84]

*Tornata*

To you, ye youthful ladies, have I spoken whose  
eyes are adorned with beauties and mind vanquished  
and bemused by love, that commended to you may  
be my rhymes where'er they be. And, before you, I  
pardon my death to that beauteous being who  
has the blame of it to me-wards, and has never pitied. [92]

## O D E X I

[? Text of the projected twelfth treatise.]

*Poscia ch' amor del tutto m'ha lasciato.*

## I

SINCE love has utterly forsaken me, not at my  
will, for never had I been so joyous, but because

<sup>1</sup> The vital spirit.

<sup>2</sup> Love.

<sup>3</sup> The sight.

<sup>4</sup> The 'virtue,' viz., sight.

<sup>5</sup> The other powers or spirits of the senses, whose chief and leader she  
had been.

he had pity so much upon my heart that he  
 might not endure to hearken to its wailing,  
 I will sing, thus disenamoured, against the  
 sin that has arisen in our midst, of counter-call-  
 ing such one as is base and irksome by a  
 name of worth, to wit of gallantry ; which is a thing so  
 fair [12]

As to make worthy of the mantle

Imperial him in whom it reigns. A veritable sign  
 it is which shows where virtue sojourns ; where-  
 fore I am assured that if I well defend it in speech,  
 even as I conceive it, love will again do me grace of  
 himself. [19]

II

There are who by flinging their wealth away think  
 to assert a place of worth there where the good take  
 stand who after death make their repair within  
 the mind of such as have discernment.

But no pleasure may their largesse give the good, be-  
 cause restraining it had been wisdom, and they had  
 escaped the loss that is now added to the error of  
 them, and of the rest who pass false judgment in their  
 deeming. [31]

Who will not call it fault

To engulf food and give the mind to wantoning and  
 deck him as for sale impending at the fair of  
 fools? For the wise prizes not a man after his gar-  
 ments which are but alien ornaments, but prizes  
 intellect and noble hearts. [38]

III

And others are there who, by being quick to  
 smile, of understanding swift would be sup-  
 posed by such as be deceived seeing them laugh  
 at aught which the blind intellect not yet perceives.

They speak with words elect go their displeasing  
 way content so they be gaped at by the herd : they  
 are enamoured never of amorous lady : in their  
 discourse they cleave to mere grimace. [50]

They will not move the foot

To serve a lady after gallant fashion : but as a  
robber to his theft so do they pace to pluck their  
base delight ; not that, in truth, in women is so  
quenched all gallant bearing that they seem  
animals bereft of intellect. [57]

## IV

Till heaven accord precise with heaven which  
gallantry casts from its way<sup>1</sup> (as much as I relate of  
it, and more), I, who have skill of it thanks to a  
gentle one who showed it forth in all her utterance,  
Shall not be silent of it ; for villainy it would ap-  
pear to me so base that I had joined me to its  
enemies.<sup>2</sup> Wherefore from this point forth with  
rhyme more subtle will I treat of truth about it :  
but to whom I know not. [69] (88)

I swear by him

Whose name is love, and who is full of saving, that  
without doing virtue none may true praise ac-  
quire ; wherefore if that which I am handling<sup>3</sup> be  
good, as each declares, it must be virtue, or with  
virtue linked. [76] (95)

## V

Not virtue pure and simple is this strayed thing ; for  
it is blamed, renounced, where virtue is demanded  
most, that is in seemly folk of spiritual  
life or garb that holds with study.

Therefore, if it be praised in a cavalier, it must be  
mingled, caused by more things than one ; wherefore  
this same needs must clothe itself upon one well  
another ill ; but virtue, pure and simple, becomes  
every man. [88] (69)

<sup>1</sup> 'Gallantry' is the object of 'casts.' The unpropitious relations of the heavens make gallantry swerve out of its orbit. I shall not withhold my testimony till better celestial conditions bring it back.

<sup>2</sup> Were I not to protest, my silence would amount to desertion and treachery.

<sup>3</sup> *I.e.*, 'gallantry,' my theme.

A joyance is it that consorts

With love himself: and the completed work, directed by this third,<sup>1</sup> is very gallantry. In being it endures even as the sun, to make whose being are conjoined the heat and light and his own perfect fair form. [95] (76)

## VI

To the great planet she<sup>2</sup> is all resemblant who, from the east forward till he conceals himself, with his fair rays down pours life and power below into material, according as it is disposed.

Even as she,—scornful of so many folk as bear human semblance, but not corresponds their fruit unto their leaves, because of ill which they have practised,—brings near like blessings to the gentle heart; [107]

For she is swift to give life

With fair semblances and new beauteous acts which every hour she seems to find: and he has virtue for his model who lays hold on her. O false cavaliers, evil and guilty, enemies of her who to the prince of stars is likened! [114]

## VII

That man whom she will have both gives and takes: and ne'er it irks him: neither the sun<sup>3</sup> to give light to the stars nor to take from them help in working his effect: but one and the other<sup>4</sup> draws delight therein.

Ne'er is he drawn to wrath by words, but such only does he gather as be good: and what things he hath to tell are, each and every, fair. For his own sake is he held dear and by sage ones desired, [126]

<sup>1</sup> Love, which with virtue and joyance (*solazzo*) under his leadership, constitutes gallantry.

<sup>2</sup> *I.e.*, 'gallantry,' hitherto spoken of as 'it' in the translation. There is no such change of gender in the original.

<sup>3</sup> *I.e.*, neither does it irk the sun.

<sup>4</sup> The sun and the gallant man.



he from whom all good must needs appear, because of  
his own image holdeth us the dearer.<sup>1</sup> [26]

## III

If thou shouldst speak, O sweet my hope, of setting  
a delay on that which I demand, know that I may not  
longer wait on it ;

For at the limit of my power I stand : and this thou  
shouldst discern, whenas I have set me to explore my  
final hope ; [32]

For to bear every load upon his back

A man is bound, up to the mortal weight, e'er he  
make trial of his chiefest friend ; for how he shall dis-  
cover him to stand he knows not, and if it chance that  
he respond amiss to him nought is there that can cost  
so dear ; for swiftest and most bitter death he hath  
thereby. [39]

## IV

And whom I chiefiest love art thou, and who the  
greatest gift canst give me, and in whom most my  
hope reposes ;

For only to serve thee do I desire life ; and such  
things as make for thy honour I demand and will :  
all else being grievous to me. [45]

Thou hast the power to give me what no other may,

For all the yea and nay of me within thy hand hath  
love placed ; whereat myself I magnify. The  
faith I mete to thee flows from thy tender bear-  
ing ; for whoso looks on thee, in verity knows  
from without that within there is pity. [52]

## V

Then let thy salutation now be launched and come  
into the heart, that waits for it, gentle my lady, e'en as  
thou hast heard :

But know that at its entrance it is found strong  
barred by that same arrow that love discharged the  
day I was made captive ; [58]

<sup>1</sup> As God loves us because we bear his image, so shouldst thou love my heart.



Whereby the entrance is disputed to all other

Save to the messengers of love, who know to open  
it by will of that same power that barred. Where-  
fore in my conflict its<sup>1</sup> coming were but hurt to  
me came it without escort of messengers of that  
liege lord who hath me in his power. [65]

*Tornata*

My ode, needs must be brief thy journey ; for thou  
knowest that for short space now that may be brought  
about for which thou goest. [68]

ODE XIII

[Text of the projected fourteenth treatise.]

*Tre donne intorno al cor mi son venute.*

I

THREE ladies have gathered round my heart and seat  
themselves without, for within sits love who  
holds seignory over my life.

So beauteous are they and of such power that the  
mighty liege, I mean him who is in my heart, can  
scarce man himself to speak of them. [8]

Each one seems grieving and dismayed

As one cast out and weary from whom all folk have  
fallen and whom nor beauty avails nor wit. Time  
was wherein, according to their speech, they were be-  
loved : now they are held in wrath and in neglect by  
all. These, so lonely, have come as to the house  
of a friend ; for they know verily that within is he of  
whom I speak. [18]

II

Much doth the one of them grieve in her words, and  
on her hand supports her, like a clipped rose : her  
naked arm, column of grief,  
Feels the ray<sup>2</sup> falling from her face : the other hand

<sup>1</sup> The salutation's.

<sup>2</sup> *I.e.*, the glancing tear.

conceals her tear-drenched locks: ungirt, un-  
sandalled, and only in herself seeming a lady. [26]

When first love through her tattered gown

Saw her where it were comely not to say, he, in  
pity and in wrath, of her and of her grief made  
question: 'Oh food of few,' answered a voice  
mingled with sighs, 'our nature sends us here to  
thee. I who am saddest am sister to thy mother,  
and am Righteousness: poor, as thou seest by my  
weeds and cincture.' [36]

## III

When she had revealed her and made known, grief  
and shame laid hold upon my lord, and he de-  
manded who were the other two with her.

And she who was so eager in her tears, soon  
as she understood him was kindled into hotter  
grief, saying: 'Now, on my eyes' behalf, hast thou  
not ruth?' [44]

Then she began: 'As thou shouldst know,

From its source springs the Nile, a slender stream: there,  
where the great light is shielded from the earth by the  
rush-spikes, over the virgin wave did I bring  
forth her at my side who with her fair tresses dries her  
tears. This my beauteous birth gazing on herself  
in the clear fountain brought her forth who is more  
distant.' [54]

## IV

His sighs held Love a little back: then with eyes  
softened, that before were wild, he greeted the  
disconsolate kinswomen;

And having grasped one and the other dart he cried:  
'Uplift your necks: behold the arms which I have  
chosen; rusted ye see them by disuse.' [62]

'Generosity and Temperance, and the others born

'Of our blood, go their way begging; whereat, if this  
be loss, let the eyes weep and the mouth wail of  
men, whom it concerns, who have come under the rays  
of such a heaven: not we, who are of the eternal  
rock, for though we now be thrust at we shall

endure, and folk will come again      who shall make this  
 dart abide in brightness.'      [72]

## V

And I who mark, in divine discourse,      comfort and  
 dole bestowed      upon such lofty exiles,      count as  
 my glory the banishment wreaked on me :

And if judgment and force of destiny      will have the  
 world convert      white flowers into dark,      falling  
 amongst the good is yet worthy praise.      [80]

But because the fair signal of my eyes <sup>1</sup>

Is reft by distance from my sight,      which has set me  
 in flame,      light should I count that which is heavy on  
 me.<sup>2</sup>      But this flame has      already so consumed my  
 bone and flesh      that death has put his key unto my  
 breast ;      for which if I had fault      many a moon  
 has the sun revolved since it was quenched      if a fault  
 dies because a man repents.      [90]

*Tornata*

Ode, on thy weeds let no man set his hand      to look  
 on that which a fair woman hides ;      let the uncovered  
 parts suffice,      the sweet apple to all folk deny      for  
 which each one extends his hand.      But if it chance that  
 ever thou find one      a friend of virtue who should pray  
 thee for it,      make thyself of fresh hues,      and reveal  
 to him the flower, that, beauteous without      wakes  
 longing in amorous hearts.      [100]

## ODE XIV

[Text of the projected fifteenth treatise.]

*Doglia mi reca nello core ardire.*

## I

GRIEF furnishes my heart with daring      for a wish that  
 is truth's friend ;      wherefore, ladies, if I utter      words  
 almost against all mankind      marvel not at it,

<sup>1</sup> I read *ma però che degli occhi miei bel segno.*

<sup>2</sup> *I.e.*, all the miseries incidental to exile I should hold light in themselves.

The general difficulties of the interpretation of this ode cannot be dealt with here.

But recognise your base desire ; for beauty which love  
 concedes to you, only for virtue was formed by  
 his decree of old, against which ye offend. [10]

You I address who are enamoured,

For if to us virtue was given, and to you beauty, and  
 to him power to make one the two, ye should not love  
 at all, but hide away whatever beauty hath been  
 granted you because there is no virtue, which was its  
 targe. Woe's me ! what do I go about to say ? I  
 say that fair disdain were with reason praised in  
 woman severing beauty from herself by her dismissal.  
 [21]

II

Man has made virtue distant from himself. Man? no!  
 but the beast that bears man's semblance ; Oh God,  
 what marvel to choose to decline to slave from  
 master, or from life to death !  
 Virtue is still supporting to her doer, him she  
 obeys, to him acquires honour, ladies, so much that  
 love stamps him of his chosen household in the  
 blessed court. [31]

Joyously she issues from the beauteous gates

Of her mistress<sup>1</sup> and returns : joyously she goes and  
 sojourns, joyously she does her great service. Through  
 the short journey preserves, adorns, increases what  
 she finds :<sup>2</sup> to death she is so counter that she heeds  
 him not. Oh, dear handmaid and pure, in heaven  
 hast thou taken measurement !<sup>3</sup> Thou alone givest  
 mastery ; and this is proved by that thou art a posses-  
 sion always of avail.<sup>4</sup> [42]

III

Slave not of a master but of a base slave he makes  
 himself who departs from such a hand-maid.<sup>5</sup> See

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, the soul.

<sup>2</sup> The natural faculties, both of mind and body.

<sup>3</sup> *I.e.*, hast fixed the values of things by heavenly standards.

<sup>4</sup> To possess her is always to be master, never slave, of the situation.

<sup>5</sup> *Serva*, corresponding to the *servo* translated 'slave' in the preceding line, but here used, without contempt, of 'virtue.'

how great the cost, reckoning one against the other  
loss, to him who wanders from her.

This slavish master is so arrogant that the eyes  
which make light for the mind are closed for him, so  
that he needs must walk at prompting of another who  
hath his eye only on folly. [52]

But that my speech may serve you

I will descend from the whole to the detail, and that  
in sentences more easy, that it be less hardly under-  
stood; for rarely underneath the veil does a dark  
saying reach the understanding; wherefore is there  
need of open speech with you: and this I will for the  
behoof of you, and verily not me; that ye hold  
vile all men and in contempt, for it is likeness that  
breeds delight. [63]

## IV

Who is a slave like him who followeth a liege in  
haste, and knoweth not whither he goeth, along the  
dolesome path; as doth the miser hurrying after  
wealth which plays the tyrant over all.

The miser runs, but peace more quickly flees (Oh  
blind mind that may not see thy mad desire!) with  
the sum he looks to catch up with his gold, that in-  
finitely gapes. [73]

Lo, when she<sup>1</sup> has come who levels us,

Tell me what hast thou wrought, blind undone  
miser? Answer me, if thou canst give other reply  
than nought. A curse upon thy cradle which  
lulled so many dreams in vain! A curse upon thy  
wasted bread which is not wasted on the dog! For  
at eve and morn thou hast amassed and clutched with  
either hand that which so swiftly draws away from  
thee. [84]

## V

As without measure it is gathered so without  
measure is it hugged. This it is that thrusts many  
into slavery: and should any defend himself it is not  
save with mighty conflict.

<sup>1</sup> Death.

Death, what art thou doing, dear<sup>1</sup> Fortune, what art  
 doing, that ye dissipate not that which is not  
 spent? But, if ye did, to whom to render it? I  
 know not, since such a circle rings us which compasses  
 us from above.<sup>2</sup> [94]

It is the blame of reason who doth not correct it.

If she would say: 'I am captive,' ah how sorry a  
 defence does the master show whom a slave over-  
 comes! Here shame is doubled if that to which I  
 point be well considered. False animals, cruel to your-  
 selves and others! For ye see, going naked o'er  
 hills and marshes, men before whom vice takes to  
 flight: and ye keep vile mire clad. [105]

## VI

Before the miser's face displays herself virtue, who  
 invites her very foes to peace with polished matter to  
 entice them to her; but little it avails, for he ever flees  
 the bait.

When she has swung it round<sup>3</sup> with many a cry she  
 flings the food towards him, so great her care for  
 him; but he spreads not his wings at it: and if  
 at last he come, when she is gone, it seems to irk him  
 so [115]

As though he could not give save so as to make vanish

All praise from benefit. I will have all men hear  
 me: one by delaying, and one by vain dis-  
 play, and one by gloomy semblance, turns the  
 gift into a sale so dear as he knows only who pays such  
 purchase. Would you hear whether it wounds? So  
 dismayed is he who receives that henceforth refusal  
 seems not bitter to him: so does the miser mutilate  
 himself and others. [126]

## VI

Ladies, in a certain branch have I unveiled to you the  
 baseness of the folk that gaze upon you, that ye may

<sup>1</sup> The MS. authority is conclusively in favour of *buona* (which must be understood as an appeal); but it is extremely difficult to believe that so startling and impressive a reading as the current *sera can* have arisen by a copyist's error. I abandon it provisionally and with hesitation.

<sup>2</sup> The influence of the heavens.

<sup>3</sup> Like a falcon's lure.

hold them in wrath ; but far more yet is that which is  
concealed because 'tis foul to tell you.

In each one is a gathering of all vices because the  
world's way is that friendship blends :<sup>1</sup> and the love-  
some leaf of the root of good draws other good  
to it for like only pleases. [136]

See how I advance to my conclusion,

For she should not believe, who thinks that she is  
fair indeed, that she is loved by such as these. But  
if beauty amongst evil things we would enumerate, it  
might be believed, calling love the appetite of a  
beast.<sup>2</sup> Oh may such woman perish as dis-  
sociates her beauty from natural goodness, on such  
cause, and believes in love outside of reason's garden.  
[147]

<sup>1</sup> As like seeks and loves like so vice draws vice.

<sup>2</sup> *I.e.*, only if we call a brute appetite love, and rank beauty as an evil thing can a really beautiful woman be loved by such men.



NOTE.—As there is but one well authenticated ode of Dante's in addition to those in the *Vita Nuova* and those of the *Convivio* group, it is here given for the sake of completeness. It is probably later than any of the rest, and stands apart from them.

## THE MOUNTAIN ODE

*Amor, dacchè convien pur ch'io mi doglia.*

LOVE, since I needs must make complaint for folk to  
hear and show myself bereft of every virtue,  
Grant me the skill to wail even as I would, that the  
woe which is discharged<sup>1</sup> may be borne forth on my  
words even as I feel it. [6]

Thou wilt have me die, and I am satisfied,  
But who shall pardon me, if I have not skill to  
tell that which thou makest me to feel? Who  
shall believe that I am now so smitten? But, if thou  
grant me speech in measure with my torment, see to it,  
O my liege, that e'er I die she who is guilty may not  
hear it through me; for should she understand that  
which I feel within, pity would make less beauteous  
her beauteous face. [15]

## II

I may not flee so that she come not within my  
fantasy, no more than I may flee the musing that brings  
her there.  
The mad soul, which plies its wit to its own ill, beau-  
teous and injurious as she is depicts her, and forges its  
own torture. [21]

Then gazes on her, and when right full  
Of the great yearning it draws through the eyes, falls  
into rage against itself for having made the fire wherein  
all dismally it burns. What argument of reason draws  
the rein on so great tempest as within me whirls?

<sup>1</sup> As from a bow.

The anguish, that may not be contained within, breathes  
 so through the mouth as to articulate and give, to  
 boot, their merit to the eyes. [30]

## III

The hostile figure that remains, victorious and  
 cruel, and that lords it o'er the power that wills,  
 Enamoured of itself bids me to go where, in verity,  
 is she herself since like to like still rushes. [36]

Well know I that 'tis snow seeking the sun,

But, having no more strength, I do as he who in  
 another's power goes with his own feet to his place of  
 death. When I draw nigh meseems that I hear  
 words which cry: 'Quick! quick! if thou wouldst see  
 him die.' Then I turn to see to whom I may  
 commend me; to such pass brought by the eyes that  
 slay me, with grievous wrong. [45]

## IV

And what, so wounded, I become, O Love, thou  
 knowest to relate, not I, thou who dost stay to look  
 on lifeless me:

And though the soul thereafter come again to the  
 heart, nescience and oblivion have been her com-  
 rades whilst she was away. [51]

When I arise again and look upon the wound

Which undid me when I was struck, I may not so  
 assure myself but that I tremble all for fear; and  
 my discoloured face declares what was the thunder bolt  
 that leaped upon me; for though 'twas a sweet smile  
 that launched it<sup>1</sup> long time thereafter it<sup>2</sup> abides  
 darkened, in that the spirit cannot trust itself. [60]

## V

Thus hast thou dealt with me, O Love, amongst the  
 alps, in that river's vale on whose banks thou  
 ever hast been strong upon me.

<sup>1</sup> The bolt.

<sup>2</sup> My face.

Here living or dead at thy will thou handlest me in  
 virtue of that fierce light that makes a thunder-crash-  
 ing path for death. [66]

Woe's me ! no ladies here, nor folk of skill<sup>1</sup>

Can I perceive, whom it may irk of my woe. If she  
 heed it not ne'er do I hope for succour from an-  
 other : and she, banned from thy court, my  
 liege, marks not thine arrow's stroke : such mail of  
 pride hath she forged for her breast, that every shaft  
 there breaks its point and course, for her armed  
 heart by nought is bitten. [75]

*Tornata*

Oh mountain song of mine, thou goest on thy  
 way, mayhap to see my city Florence who bars  
 me out from her, void of love and stripped of  
 pity. If thou enter in, go crying : ' Now no longer  
 can my maker war upon thee here ; there whence I come  
 clips him a chain such that should thy cruelty give  
 way he has no longer freedom to return.'

<sup>1</sup> Skill in love.

## APPENDIX

### I

*The date of the Convivio and its relation to the De Vulgari Eloquentia and the De Monarchia.*

DANTE contrasts the *Convivio*, as a work composed after he had passed the threshold of 'manhood' (*gioventute*), with the *Vita Nuova* as written before he had crossed it (I. i. : 125-127); and he regarded 'manhood' as lasting from twenty-five to forty-five (IV. 24 : 22-37). But since Beatrice died in 1290, Dante's twenty-fifth year, the *Vita Nuova* as a whole cannot have been written in the poet's 'adolescence,' before he entered 'manhood.' The passage, then, can only indicate that the range of emotion represented by the poems of the *Vita Nuova* belongs to the poet's 'adolescence,' and that with which he desires to connect the canzoni, or odes, to his early 'manhood.'

As to the prose work itself we have more precise indications. When the first treatise was written Dante had long been an exile and had wandered over almost every region of Italy (I. 3 : 20-33). This places us at least some years later than 1302.

The first treatise refers forward to the fourth (I. 1 : 123); the second treatise presupposes the first (II. 1 : 14-16), and refers forward to the third (II. 16 : 23, 94); the third refers back

to the second (III. 1 : 1-4) and forward to the fourth (III. 7 : 145 ; 13 : 37), while both second and third directly carry forward a part of the promise and programme of the first (I. 1 : 127-132. Compare I. 2 : 114-127). The fourth treatise three times refers back to the third (IV. 20 : 33 ; 23 : 141 ; 30 : 52). It departs in one respect from the programme announced as general in the second treatise (compare IV. 1 : 83-92 with II. 1 : 119-124). At least three of the unwritten treatises were planned, in more or less detail, when the existing books were written (see *note* on p. 7 f.). Back-references generally specify the chapter, fore-references never.

Unless definite proof can be brought to the contrary, therefore, we have a right to suppose that the four treatises of the *Convivio* were written in the order in which we have them, and that the whole scheme of the book, as projected in fifteen treatises (compare I. 1 : 101-105), was already definitely worked out in the author's mind (though subject to modification in detail) when he began to write the first treatise.

The indications of date in the fourth treatise are fairly precise. Rudolf, Adolf and Albert have successively become emperors since Frederick II., but the election of Henry VII. in November 1308 (*L'art de verifier les dates*) has not yet taken place (IV. 3 : 38-43) ; whereas it is implied that Gherardo da Cammino, who died in March 1306 (Toynbee), is no longer living (IV. 14 : 114-123). If we may infer from the passage cited above that Albert is already dead we shall be carried past May 1, 1308 (*L'art de*

*verifier les dates*), and shall have a very precise date; but though this seems the natural reading of the passage it is hardly safe to lay stress on it. But further, a comparison of IV. 6: 180 ff. with *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, I. 12: 36-39 suggests, though it does not prove, that Azzo of Este was already dead,<sup>1</sup> which would take us past the beginning of 1308.

Our conclusion then is that the four treatises of the *Convivio* were begun a considerable time (probably several years) after 1302, and were finished before November 1308, and that the fourth treatise was begun certainly after March 1306, and probably after the beginning of 1308.

The idea irresistibly suggests itself that the election of Henry was at least one of the causes that diverted Dante's mind from the completion of the *Convivio*; and we shall be disposed to regard the whole design and execution of the fragment we possess as belonging essentially to the year 1308 or the immediately preceding years.

The close relation of the *Convivio* in general, and of the first treatise in particular, to the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* is obvious. Both works deal with the *Odes*; and in both Dante regards these compositions with evident pride, as conferring on him his chief title to literary fame. In both his thoughts are engaged on the relations between Latin and the vernaculars, though his views, or at anyrate the expression of them, do not completely agree in the two works. Compare *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, I. 1: 34-41, with *Convivio* I. 5: 45 *sqq.*

<sup>1</sup> See below p. 423, and *note*.

In the absence of clear proof to the contrary we are justified in assuming that these two works (including the second as well as the first book of the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*) belong to the same period of Dante's life, as they certainly move in the same circle of ideas and interests, and take the same view of the general scope of vernacular poetry. Internal evidence confirms this impression. In the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* (I. 12 : 36-39) Frederick II., King of Sicily (not the Emperor Frederick II.); Charles II. of Naples; the Marquis John (evidently of Monferrato) and the Marquis Azzo (evidently of Ferrara) are spoken of as though still living. They died respectively in 1343, May 1309, January 1305, and January 1308<sup>1</sup> (*L'art de verifier les dates*). On the other hand, Dante is already in exile (I. 6 : 17-23). This gives us a range from the beginning of 1302 to the end of 1304, for the composition of the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, and when we reflect on the political agitations that absorbed Dante's thoughts in the early period of his exile we shall be inclined to place the composition of the work in 1304 rather than earlier.

Against this conclusion (which I think we must accept) two objections may be urged. Villani (IX. 106) and Boccaccio (*Vita di Dante*) both conjecture that the composition of

<sup>1</sup> In an analagous passage in the *Convivio* (IV. 6 : 180 ff.) Frederick and Charles still figure, whereas John and Azzo have disappeared. This we have taken (see p. 422, above) as another indication that the fourth treatise of the *Convivio* was written after the beginning of 1308.



the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* was, or may have been, interrupted by the poet's death. But as they speak quite generally, and seem to have no other data to go on than the fragmentary state of the work, we need not attach any special importance to their suggestion. It is noteworthy that Villani gives the same reason, with greater confidence, for the unfinished state of the *Convivio*; and this we certainly cannot accept. Moreover, the passage of Villani itself appears not to be above suspicion.

A more formidable difficulty is presented by a passage in the *Convivio* (I. 5 : 66-69) in which Dante speaks of a work which '*I intend to write, God granting, on the vernacular speech,*' and in which he promises to deal with a subject actually handled in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* as we have it (I. 9 : 50-93). To this we can only say that whereas the passage would certainly warrant us in assuming the priority of the first book of the *Convivio* to the first book of the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, it does not warrant us in ignoring the clear proof that the first book of the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* was written before the beginning of 1305, and the very strong presumption that the *Convivio* was not completed till the middle or towards the end of 1308; for if Dante took one work in hand before he had completed the other (and this he must in any case have done), and intended to complete the *Convivio* before he resumed the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* he might well refer to the latter (even when speaking of the parts already written) as a future work. But if this seems

straining a point, the reader may suppose that the *Convivio* was begun first of the two, without supposing that it is prior as a whole; but in that case he will have difficulty in finding time for the long wanderings mentioned in I. 3: 20-33.

The general conclusion seems safe that the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* may be dated 1304, and the *Convivio* 1308, allowing the possibility in the former case that the work may have overflowed into the immediately following years, and in the latter case that it may have been begun in the years immediately preceding.

It remains to examine the relation of the *Convivio* to the *De Monarchia*. There are two considerations, one of a general and one of a special nature, which give strong support to the belief that the *De Monarchia* is later than the *Convivio*.

Both works alike deal with the Roman empire, and in a general way it might be maintained with equal show of justice that Chapters IV. and V. of the fourth treatise of the *Convivio* are a popular summary of the treatment of the empire in Book II. of the *De Monarchia*, or that they are a preliminary sketch of it. But we note that the specific relations of Church and State, which form the real subject of the *De Monarchia*, are ignored in the *Convivio*. In place of them we find a short passage on the relations of philosophy to the office of government (IV. 6: 154-190). Indeed, though we shall see (p. 430) that Dante is full of recognition of the Church as the organ of spiritual truth, he does not seem in any way at all to take count of her as a governing institution.

Even in the beautiful passage (IV. 4: 64) in which he likens the whole human civility to a 'religious order' (*religione*) he seems to be thinking rather of the ideal philosophical emperor than of the pope as the 'superior.' Again the doctrine of revelation is never in any way worked out in the *Convivio*. The 'contemplative life' is looked upon throughout rather from the point of view of philosophy than of revelation. It is therefore impossible not to feel that the *De Monarchia* represents a more developed scheme and one far more closely connected with that of the *Commedia* than we find in the *Convivio*. After making all allowances for the differences of treatment natural in a popular and in a scholarly work, we have still to admit that if the *Convivio* were later than the *De Monarchia* it would constitute a bewildering parenthesis between this latter and the *Commedia*, and would indicate a marked relapse from maturity into comparative crudity.

To this general argument we may add a specific one of great weight. In the fourth treatise of the *Convivio* Dante criticises at great length and with unsparing severity that portion of the Emperor Frederick's definition of nobility which makes 'ancient wealth' one of its essential factors. And he defends himself from the charge of irreverence towards the empire, in thus disputing the emperor's definition, by declaring that it is not part of the imperial office (but rather, as he implies, a part of the office of the philosopher) to define nobility. He also attempts to show that a sentiment of Aristotle's which might, quite indirectly, be brought

to the support of the opinion he attacks, does not really bear the construction put upon it by his imaginary opponent (*Convivio*, IV. 3 *sqq.*, especially 9: 160-179). Now the fact is that the incriminated part of Frederick's definition is really due to no other than Aristotle himself, who defines nobility as 'ancient wealth and virtue' (*Politics*, IV. viii. 9). Dante, then, must have seen the utter futility of his attempt to make out that he is only dealing with the emperor in his unofficial capacity and with an indirect and erroneous deduction from Aristotle, had the passage in Aristotle been in his mind. It is clear, then, that he did not know it, or had forgotten it, when he wrote the fourth treatise of the *Convivio*. But in the *De Monarchia* (II. 3: 15-17), Dante expressly quotes this passage from Aristotle, and works out his main thesis as to the nobility of the Roman people in connection with it, if not in direct dependence on it. Is it possible that after that he could so completely have forgotten it as to be able to write as he has done in the *Convivio*?

We are driven to the conclusion therefore that internal evidence points strongly to the priority of the *Convivio* to the *De Monarchia*. With the general difficulties involved in assigning this (or indeed any other) date to the *De Monarchia* we cannot now deal.

## II

*On Dante's 'second love' and the relation of the Convivio to the Vita Nuova and the Commedia.*

THE *Convivio* is the monument of Dante's 'second love' (III. 1: 2), and we can have no difficulty in forming a clear conception of its object. Dante's 'second love' was for *wisdom*, that is to say the 'Wisdom of God,' spoken of in the *Proverbs* and the *Wisdom of Solomon*. The wisdom that Dante loved was 'the brightness of the eternal light, the spotless mirror of the majesty of God' (III. 15: 54, 55. See *Wisdom*, VII. 26). Solomon declared of her that God began all creation in company with her, and exclaimed in her person: 'When he prepared the heavens, I was there,' etc. (*Convivio*, III. 15: 155 ff.; *Proverbs*, VIII. 27 ff.). She is therefore the Logos of the proem of the Gospel of John (III. 14: 62-64); and she is expressly identified with the incarnate Deity. 'Oh worse than dead, who flee from her friendship! Open your eyes and see that before ye were she loved you, preparing and ordaining your progress; and after ye were made *she came to you in your likeness*, to guide you aright' (III. 15: 178-184). And again, 'Oh, ineffable and incomprehensible wisdom of God, which *against thy coming* didst make so great preparation beforehand up there in Syria and here in Italy' (IV. 5: 69-72).

Ultimately, then, Dante's second love is for wisdom as a hypostasis in the Trinity. But the transition is easy to wisdom as an attribute of

Deity, not identified with Deity itself. Thus Dante says of her that her 'proper abode is in the most secret place of the divine mind' (IV. 30: 66-68), or that she is 'the spouse of the Emperor of heaven,' and 'not only spouse, but sister and most beloved daughter' (III. 12: 115-118). And the wisdom that thus exists primarily in the Creator exists in a secondary way in created intelligences, angelic and human (III. 13: 1-26). The love of her is philosophy, and therefore Dante may say of his 'second love' that the lady of his adoration 'was the daughter of God, the queen of all that is, the most noble and most beauteous Philosophy' (II. 13: 71-73). And finally, since the object of any emotion is often called by the name of that emotion itself, the subjects which philosophy (love of wisdom) studies may themselves bear the name of philosophy, and so the sciences, one and all, are a part of the object of Dante's love, inasmuch as they are parts of his lady (III. 11: 95-102, 154-186). And amongst the sciences the noblest and surest place is taken by theology, which 'suffers no strife of opinions or of sophistical arguments,' and is therefore likened to the tranquil empyrean heaven (II. 15: 165-184).

Such being the lady of Dante's 'second love,' it is clear that she can in no sense be the rival of theology, and since she supersedes Beatrice in Dante's affections (II. 16: 50-58, and the second treatise generally), Beatrice cannot be taken as the symbol of theology in the scheme of the *Convivio*; nor indeed is there any in-

dication whatever in this work that Beatrice stands, as yet, for anything but the Florentine maiden 'who lives in heaven with the angels, and on earth with my soul' (II. 2 : 6-8).

Nor is there any note of hesitation or doubt in Dante's devotion to the Church. She is the 'spouse and secretary' of God (II. 6 : 33), she is holy Church 'who cannot utter falsehood' (II. 4 : 32). Our minds are incapable of grasping the highest truths unless aided by revelation (II. 6 : 1-20; III. 7 : 161, 162, etc.). The Christian faith 'cannot lie' (IV. 15 : 49, 50, etc.), and has supreme authority, above that of philosophers and poets (IV. 15 : 90-96, etc.).

It is obvious from these passages, and many others that might be added to them, that the *Convivio* is not in any way the record (as has been maintained) of a period during which Dante exalted human reason or secular philosophy to the same level of authority as revelation, or treated theology with disrespect. What he records in the *Convivio* is a period in his life during which his love of study became his dominating passion, partially eclipsing the memory of Beatrice. But the wisdom he loved, so far from leading him away from theology led him to it, for theology was the most glorious of the sciences, which constituted the body of wisdom, as love constituted her soul (compare III. 11 : 129-136 with the passages cited above).

Clearly Dante's dominating motive in writing the *Convivio* was a passion for the study and the promulgation of philosophic truth (see I. 1,



the concluding passage of chap. xiii., and many other passages throughout the work); but he tells us very distinctly that he was also moved by the desire to glorify the Italian language (I. 10 ff.); and by the desire to avert from himself the 'infamy of having yielded to so great a passion' as the reader of his *Odes* would suppose to have had possession of him. And the way in which he intends to avert this 'infamy' is by allegorising all the odes of passion, without distinction (I. 2: 120-123; II. 16: 98-103; III. 1: 1 *sqq.*, 77 *sqq.*; IV. 1: 92-99, etc.). This intention may have been only incidental to the real purpose, but it was evidently essential and integral to the method and scheme of the *Convivio*.

We have to ask, then, whether we can accept all the love poems on which Dante comments, or promises to comment, in the *Convivio* as having really been addressed in the first instance to philosophy. It is clear that we cannot. The seventh treatise was to be a comment on *Ode VI.* (compare IV. 26: 64-67, *note*; and further III. 10: 41, *note*), and it is impossible for a moment to believe that this poem relates to anything but earthly passion. Dante's confession to Forese (*Purgatorio*, XXIII. 115-119) and his desire to dissociate himself from the moral impression produced by his *Odes* are a sufficient comment on this poem and its companions, even if for the moment we leave aside the evidence of Cantos XXX. and XXXI. of the *Purgatorio*. Some of the *Convivio* cycle of odes commemorated phases of passion from which the author, in the lofty sense of his mission, now desired to dissociate himself.

Examining the *Odes* in detail, we can have little doubt that VI., VII., VIII. and IX. were poems of earthly love inspired by a woman of whom we have no other knowledge; and that II., IV. and V. are hymns of love genuinely addressed to philosophy; whereas X. and XII. seem to connect themselves with Beatrice; and I. irresistibly carries us to the Lady of the Window of the *Vita Nuova*, with whom indeed Dante himself directly connects it (II. 2 : 1-12).

Now we cannot accept Dante's asseveration that the Lady of the Window was no other than philosophy (see the citations above, and especially II. 16 : 98-103), and that the ode *Voi che intendendo il terzo ciel movete*, which stands at the head of the second treatise, was from the first allegorical. We might hesitate to disbelieve his express statement had we not seen that it is merely incidental to his general purpose of allegorising all his odes. As it is, this particular bit of allegorising must stand or fall with the whole scheme—that is to say, it must fall with it. But the inconsistencies and frigidities to which Dante is driven in allegorising this ode are in themselves sufficiently convincing. In the *Vita Nuova* the Lady of the Window first appears to Dante 'a certain space' after the first anniversary of Beatrice's death (§ 36 : 1), and then tries his constancy during 'certain days' (§ 40 : 13), after which the memory of Beatrice victoriously reasserts itself, and the poet, writing after the close of the whole episode, pronounces the thought of this lady as 'gentle in so far as it discoursed of a gentle lady, but in other respects most base'

(§ 39: 30-32).<sup>1</sup> Further he declared that the 'heart' (in *Sonnet XXII.*) which took part for the Lady of the Window signifies 'appetite.' In the *Convivio* the lady (now identified with my lady philosophy) first appears to Dante considerably more than three years after Beatrice's death<sup>2</sup> (II. 2: 1-6), it is some thirty months after this before he has sufficiently overcome the first difficulties of study to feel the full power of his enamourment (II. 13: 45-52), he does not purpose to speak any more of Beatrice in this whole work (II. 9: 53-55), he emphatically warns his reader against taking 'heart' (in *Ode I.*) to mean any 'special part of the soul or body' (II. 7: 21 f.),

<sup>1</sup> We still possess the poem in which Dante closed and sealed this episode of the Lady of the Window. It is *Sonnet XLII.* in Moore's edition, and it runs:

Ye words of mine already in the world                    who had  
your birth after that I began                    to write, anent that  
lady in whom I went astray,                    *Ye who by understand-*  
*ing move the third heaven;*

Go your ways to her, for well ye know her,                    so  
weeping as that she may hear your wailings.                    Say to  
her: 'We are thine; and so henceforth                    more than  
our number never look to see.'

Abide not with her, for love is not there;                    but  
wander round in mourning habit                    after the fashion  
of your ancient sisters.\*

Whenso ye find a worthy lady                    fling yourselves  
at her feet, in humbleness,                    and say: 'To thee we  
are bounden to do honour.'

<sup>2</sup> Lubin in *Dante e gli Astronomi Italiani*, Trieste, 1895, has proved beyond all possibility of dispute that the period of Venus referred to must be taken as 583 days and odd hours.

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\* The poems concerning the lost Beatrice.

and so far from being ashamed of his new love as 'most base,' he frankly exalts it over his first love (for Beatrice), and declares that 'a man ought not, because of a greater friend, to forget the services received from the lesser; but if it really behoves him to follow the one and to leave the other, when he follows the better the other is not to be abandoned without some fitting lamentation.' (II. 16: 52-57).

In spite of Dante's declaration, then, that he does not intend the *Convivio* in any way to derogate from the *Vita Nuova* (I. 1: 114, 115), we must believe that it was only by a *tour de force* that he could attempt to harmonise the scheme of the one work with that of the other, and that we shall be safer in basing our judgment as to the Lady of the Window and the ode that concerns her upon the internal evidence of the *Vita Nuova* and the ode itself, than upon the express assertions, avowedly made with a purpose, of the *Convivio*.

We have therefore reached the conclusion that Dante desired to dissociate himself from the implications of some of his poems, which implications he regarded as infamous, that he intended to effect his purpose by treating all his love poems as allegorical, and that in pursuance of this purpose he actually explained *Ode I.* in a manner inconsistent with the narrative of the *Vita Nuova* and with the facts.

But the scheme (alien surely from Dante's sincerity of character) was never completely carried out. Henry's election and expedition, as we have seen reason to believe, interrupted the progress of the *Convivio* and gave rise first

to the *De Monarchia* and then to the *Political Letters*. After Henry's fall the world had changed for Dante. His thoughts had been matured, his whole nature had passed through the fire, his life thought had deepened from that of the *Convivio* to that of the *Comedy*.

And if the substance of the *Convivio* had become inadequate its form and scheme had become impossible. Dante had come to see that if there is any aspect of our past lives that is at war with our present lives and aspirations we must dissociate ourselves from it, not by allegorising it away, but by purgatorially living ourselves out of it, and into its opposite, by confession and by penitence. At the same time he perceived that philosophy, so far from leading him away from Beatrice, had been leading him back to her. It was in sin that he had wandered from her, it was in love of wisdom that he came back to her. My lady philosophy, no longer the rival of Beatrice, was resolved into Beatrice's emissary, Virgil, and Beatrice herself; the superseded scheme of symbolism of the *Convivio*, was abandoned; the poet purged himself from its taint of insincerity; and, after his passage through Purgatory, the supreme confession and the agony of penitence with which he met his outraged ideal in the earthly Paradise give us his final comment on the aberrations he had once thought to explain away—final save for the light that streams upon the whole question of sin, repentance and forgiveness from the *Paradiso*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The extreme conciseness of treatment which it has been necessary here to observe may be supplemented by a

## III

*The Astronomy of the Convivio.*

DANTE follows the Ptolemaic system of astronomy, a good account of which will be found in Young's *General Astronomy* (Ginn & Co., 1900), § 500 *sqq.*; but he only deals with the simplest elements of the system and avoids all such points as the eccentricities of the planetary orbits, corresponding to the ellipticities of orbits of modern astronomy.

The difficulty which students find in understanding the astronomical passages in Dante is due to ignorance of astronomy in general, not to ignorance of the Ptolemaic system, which is extremely simple, and easy to connect directly with the observed phenomena of the heavens. Dante's expositions are of admirable lucidity, and anyone who has watched the actual doings of the stars, the sun and moon, and the planets, will understand them without difficulty. Those who are only acquainted with representations of the solar system in books or orreries may find some difficulty in adjusting their minds to a system that always keeps in direct touch with the appearance of the heavens, as really seen

study of Witte's essay on 'Dante's Trilogv' (the classical exposition of the views I am combatting) and my Appendix to it, in *Essays on Dante*, by Karl Witte. Duckworth & Co., 1898. See also *notes* on IV. 1: 62-65, and *Purgatorio*, XXXIII. 85-99. For a brief statement of the whole case see Gardner's *Dante Primer*, pp. 53-64.

from the earth ; but the following hints may be found useful.<sup>1</sup>

The starry heaven presents the appearance of a solid sphere revolving round fixed poles (one of which is visible to us) from east to west. This appearance was taken by the ancients as a fact. Between midnight and midnight, *i.e.*, during one diurnal revolution of the sun round the earth, any given star that has been observed will be found to have completed something more than a full revolution, and consequently to be further west than it was twenty-four hours ago. That is to say, the stars revolve faster than the sun, and constantly overtake him in their journey from east to west. In the course of a year the whole starry heaven has thus overtaken and passed the sun, so that the stars are once more in the same relative positions with respect to him.

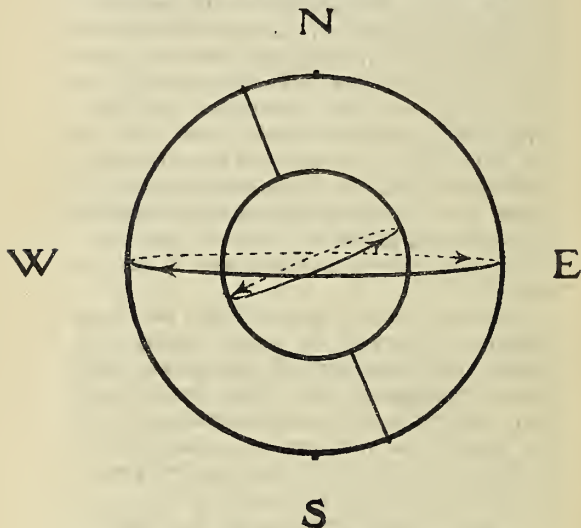
Moreover, the sun rises due east at the spring equinox, and then till the summer solstice rises further and further north till he is about  $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  north of the equator, then a little further south every day, till at the autumn equinox he is on the equator and rises due east again, and by the winter solstice is  $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  south of the equator ; after which he creeps north again.

It will be seen, then, that in the course of

<sup>1</sup> If the reader takes any ordinary representation of the solar system and (ignoring the Asteroids, Neptune and Uranus) exchanges the places of the sun and the earth (the moon accompanying the earth), he will get Dante's conception of the succession of the 'seven planets' as they follow each other outward from the fixed earth at the centre, *viz.*, the moon, Mercury, Venus, the sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn. Beyond these were the fixed stars.



a year the sun both lags behind the stars till they have all passed him, and also moves north and south within a space of  $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  on each side of the equator; that is to say, he works back through the stars, tracing on the starry heavens a great circle at an angle of  $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  with the equator, and cutting the equator at two points.



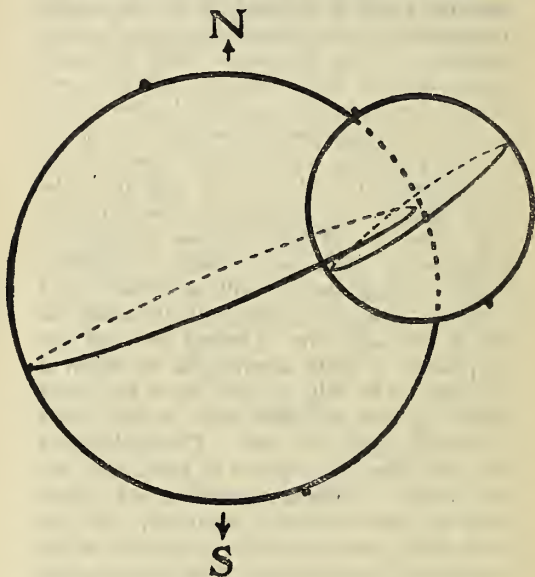
To account for this, the ancients supposed that inside the sphere of the stars was another sphere, the axes of which were fixed (not mechanically, as suggested by the figure) in two points of the starry sphere  $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  distant from the poles, and that the sun was fixed on the equator of this inner sphere.

Now let the reader suppose himself to be standing somewhere on the surface of the earth, in the northern hemisphere, at the centre of the two spheres in the figure. If the outer sphere revolved, carrying the inner sphere (otherwise motionless) with it, he would see the sun moving round once in every twenty-four (sidereal) hours clockwise. If on the other hand the outer sphere were to cease revolving and the inner sphere were to revolve counter-clockwise once in a year, he would see the sun trace a circle on the starry sphere, moving back from west to east at its most northern point  $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  above the starry equator and at its most southern point  $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  below it. If both of these motions are going on at once, both effects will follow. That is to say, the sun will be carried round every day from east to west with the stars, but will at the same time lag behind them and also creep north or south according to the season of the year. He will, in fact, trace the spiral which has been described above as the course he actually appears to take. The resolution of this spiral into a combination of two circles was the triumph of ancient astronomy, and it still holds its place in modern astronomy, the two circles being now regarded as the motion of the earth round her own axis and her motion round the sun.

The motion of the moon is like that of the sun, only that her 'proper' orbit from west to east is completed in a month instead of a year. A closer inner sphere, therefore, was supposed, which sympathetically obeyed the motion of the starry sphere and had its oblique axis fixed (not

mechanically) in it, but was unaffected by the motion of the sun's 'proper' sphere. On its equator the moon was fixed.

The motion of the planets (other than the sun and moon, which are also regarded as planets



by the ancients) is more complicated. On the whole, they travel through the stars, obliquely to the equator, from west to east, like the sun and moon, each having its own period of 'proper' revolution. But they do not travel steadily, and sometimes they actually travel westward through the stars for a time. To explain this

the ancients introduced, in the case of these planets, a third circular motion. The planet (Venus, for instance) was not supposed to be fixed (like the sun) on the equator of its proper sphere, but another smaller sphere, the centre of which would lie on the equator of that sphere, was supposed to be thrust into its side, and to revolve round the centre which the greater sphere was itself carrying round the earth from west to east.<sup>1</sup> Here the reader's modern conception of the solar system may help his imagination. Let him suppose himself to be observing our moon from the sun, in the centre of the system. Further, let him suppose the distance of the moon from the earth to be immensely increased, and the motion of the earth so slowed down that the movement of the moon round the earth is more rapid than that of the earth round the sun, and lastly let him suppose the earth to shrink till it becomes a mere ideal point circling round the sun while the moon circles round it. He will see that under these conditions the moon would appear to take a looped course through the stars, prevailing from west to east, but occasionally doubling back from east to west. This is exactly analogous to the course of a planet as seen from the earth, and explained in terms of the Ptolemaic mechanism. The three circles, of the starry sphere, the planet's proper sphere, and the planet's epicycle or inserted sphere, correspond to the three circles of the earth's revolution on her axis, her revolution round the sun, and the planet's revolution

<sup>1</sup> The whole, of course, being carried round by the daily motion of the whole heavens

round the sun, as conceived by modern astronomy. Again, the great triumph of resolving the extremely complex apparent motion of the planet into a combination of three circles was won by the ancients and is still enjoyed by the modern astronomers.

Finally, Hipparchus<sup>1</sup> observed the phenomenon now known as the precession of the equinoxes, and explained by modern astronomy as due to a slow top-like motion of the earth's axis. Its effect on the appearance of the heavens is to make a slow change in the pole of the daily rotation of the starry heavens. Our pole star was not always, and will not always be, so near the pole as it now is. This was explained by the ancients by supposing that the starry sphere itself had its poles obliquely fixed (not mechanically) in a sphere outside itself, on which there is no heavenly body, just as the poles of the proper spheres of the planets were fixed in the starry sphere. It was this outmost sphere to which the daily rotation of the whole heavens from east to west was due. The starry sphere had a slow 'proper' motion from west to east (one degree in a hundred years, Dante thought), which was communicated, like that of the *Primum mobile*, or outmost sphere, to all the inner spheres. The 'proper' motions of the other spheres were strictly 'proper'; that is, they not only originated in them but were not communicated by them to any of the lower spheres within them.

<sup>1</sup> Ptolemy long had the credit of it. See *Convivio*, II. 3 : 36 sqq.

PARTIAL TABULATION OF THE SECOND MAIN DIVISION  
OF THE FOURTH TREATISE

Under II.	<p>(a) False opinions.</p> <p>(b) The true opinion.</p>	<p>(a) Statement.</p> <p>(β) Refutation of</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">{ (i.) Riches. (ii.) Time.</p>	<p>(See next page.)</p>	
		<p>(i.) Preliminary inquiries.</p> <p>(ii.) Definition.</p> <p>(i.) General.</p> <p>(ii.) Specific to</p>	<p>{ (1<sup>o</sup>) Meaning of word noble. (2<sup>o</sup>) Proper method of defining.</p>	<p>{ (i.) Nature of virtue. (ii.) The moral virtues. (iii.) Their point of contact with nobleness.</p>
		<p>(a) Nature of nobleness.</p> <p>(β) Manifestation of nobleness.</p>	<p>{ (1<sup>o</sup>) Reflections on the virtues. (2<sup>o</sup>) Examination of nobleness.</p>	<p>{ (i.) Virtue derived from nobleness. (ii.) Nobleness the seed of blessedness.</p>
			<p>{ (1<sup>o</sup>) Adolescence. (2<sup>o</sup>) Manhood. (3<sup>o</sup>) Age. (4<sup>o</sup>) Decrepitude.</p>	

FULLER TABULATION OF II.  $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$  IN THE FOURTH TREATISE

<p>(<math>\beta</math>) Refutation of</p>	<p>{</p> <p>(i.) Riches.</p> <p>{</p> <p>(1<sup>o</sup>) The emperor's definition erroneous.</p> <p>{</p> <p>(2<sup>o</sup>) Because riches are</p> <p>{</p> <p>(1<sup>o</sup>) The adversary's plea destroys his own contention, or lands him in these four absurdities.</p> <p>{</p> <p>(2<sup>o</sup>) But is itself absurd, for it involves</p> <p>{</p> <p>(i.) Either, that we are all base or noble;</p> <p>(ii.) Or, that man had a plural origin.</p>	<p>{</p> <p>(i.) Base [further demonstrated in a digression].</p> <p>(ii.) Remote from nobleness.</p> <p>{</p> <p>(i.) Good produced by evil.</p> <p>(ii.) No distinction between base and noble.</p> <p>(iii.) The generated precedes the generating.</p> <p>(iv.) A churl when alive becomes noble when dead.</p>



## EDITORIAL NOTE

IN preparing this translation for the *Temple Classics* I have generally followed the text of Dr. Moore's *Oxford Dante*; but I have sometimes preferred that of Pederzini's *Variorum* edition (Modena, 1831), or have adopted a manuscript-reading which it indicates. On these matters, and on significant changes of punctuation, I have given such information in the notes as I thought might be useful in a popular work, but not in a uniform or systematic manner. But in the few cases in which I have ventured upon actual emendations of the MS. text, on my own authority, I have of course invariably given notice of them in the notes. Square brackets in the text indicate insertions.

Both translation and notes are for the most part based on independent study, but I have found Pederzini's edition, cited above, of the highest value in difficult passages. Kannegiesser's German translation (Leipzig, 1856) I have found useful as a check; but, though it is in general a singularly careful and scholarly piece of work, it follows Pederzini in cases of difficulty so closely as to deprive it of independent value in passages of doubtful interpretation.

When my translation was completed I compared it throughout with Miss Hillard's (*The Banquet*, Kegan Paul, 1889). I have felt compelled in very many passages to adhere to a translation at variance with hers, as will be obvious to anyone who compares the two versions; but the number of passages in which her translation enabled me to detect and avoid mistakes in my own can of course be known

only to myself; and I wish to be allowed (if I may do it without impertinence) to express my thanks to her, together with my high admiration of the sustained brilliance of her work from the literary point of view.

To Mr. Toynbee's *Dante Dictionary* and *Studies* my obligations are extensive. Many of them are acknowledged in detail.

My debt to Dr. Moore's first series of *Studies* will be understood by those, but by those only, who have attempted some work similar to that involved in annotating the *Convivio*. I have not always agreed with him in my identification of Dante's references to Aristotle, and I have often drawn independent conclusions from the material he has gathered; but my work (such as it is) would have been almost impossible, within the limits of time at my disposal, had I not been able to take his patient researches as a starting-point.

To Mr. Edmund Gardner I owe a very special personal debt indicated in connection with the translation of the odes. PHILIP H. WICKSTEED.

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